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A year after AI crash, final report yet to see daylight

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Govt waives excise duty for higher ethanol fuel

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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WITH 48 TEAMS, BIGGEST FIFA WORLD CUP BEGINS

LOS ANGELES, 11 JUNE

The countdown to the 2026 FIFA World Cup is nearly over, and football's biggest tournament is set to begin with a grand celebration spread across three countries.

This edition is bigger and longer than any World Cup before it. The field has expanded to 48 teams from the 32 that have contested every tournament since 1998, and a record 104 matches will be played across 16 stadiums across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, according to FIFA.

According to ABC News, for the first time in FIFA World Cup history, the tournament will feature three separate opening ceremonies, with celebrations planned in Mexico City, Toronto and Los Angeles before the opening round of matches.

The festivities will begin on 11 June in Mexico City ahead of the opening match between Mexico and South Africa. Global music stars Shakira and Burna Boy are set to headline the ceremony with a performance of the official FIFA World Cup song, Dai Dai.

The opening ceremony in Mexico City will take place 90 minutes before kick-off, which is scheduled for 3 pm ET. Fans around the world will be able to watch the event live on Fox and FS1, while Spanish-language coverage will be available on Telemundo. Matches and ceremonies will also be streamed through Tubi, FOX One and the Fox Sports apps, ABC News said.

The celebrations will continue on 12 June with two more opening ceremonies.

Toronto will host a ceremony before Canada's clash against Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Los Angeles will stage its own event ahead of the United States' opening match against Paraguay.

The Toronto ceremony will begin 90 minutes before kick-off at 3 pm ET.

HOW TO WATCH FIFA IN INDIA

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is all set to capture the imagination of the fans with the supporters in India eagerly waiting for kickoff.

The broadcast of the tournament in the country was under a cloud for a long period, but just days before the start of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Zee Entertainment was confirmed as the tournament's official broadcaster in India. Meanwhile, DD has announced that it will be telecasting select matches during the duration of the tournament on its sports channel. —*Salar News*

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Clinton, a footballer and ardent Argentina supporter, prepares his shop ahead of World Cup at Cambridge Layout in Bengaluru —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

US hits ship with Indians; 3rd in 4 days

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

India on Thursday said three merchant vessels carrying Indian crew members were attacked by the US military off the coast of Oman over the past four days, resulting in the deaths of three Indian nationals, and confirmed that it had lodged a strong diplomatic protest with Washington.

The latest incident involved the Guinea-Bissau-flagged oil tanker M/T Jalveer, which was struck by two Hellfire missiles fired by a US aircraft on Thursday. According to US Central Command (CENTCOM), the vessel was targeted after allegedly failing to comply with directions while transporting Iranian oil through the Gulf of Oman. Twenty Indian sailors aboard the ship were rescued and evacuation efforts are underway.

Earlier, the Palau-flagged tanker Marivex, carrying 24 Indian seafarers, was disabled by US forces on June 8, with all crew safely rescued. On June 10, another Palau-flagged tanker, Settebello, came under attack, killing three Indian sailors. The remaining 25 crew members, including 21 Indians, were evacuated safely.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said all three attacks were carried out by the US Navy. Following the Settebello strike, India summoned US Charge d'Affaires Jason Meeks and lodged a formal protest.

"We attach high importance to the welfare and safety of our seafaring community. These attacks must stop," Jaiswal said, adding that India had urged dialogue, diplomacy and unimpeded navigation through the Strait of Hormuz in accordance with international law.

Jaiswal noted that the vessels were foreign-flagged and not Indian-owned. Two were under sanctions administered by the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), while the third was deemed non-compliant.

Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mukesh Mangal said families of the deceased sailors would receive Rs 10 lakh each through the Seamen Welfare Fund Society.

India also raised the issue at the UN Security Council, warning that attacks on commercial shipping threaten maritime security, regional stability and global trade. Officials said the evolving situation in West Asia and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz could figure in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's discussions during the G7 summit in France next week. —*PTI*

Iran says Strait of Hormuz shut until further notice

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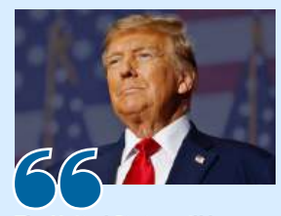
India says US attack on ships off Oman coast must end immediately

A videograb shows Guinea-Bissau-flagged oil tanker M/T Jalveer struck by two Hellfire missiles fired by a US aircraft on Thursday —*SCREENGRAB*

Citing fallout from Iran war, World Bank cuts forecast for global economic growth to just **2.5%** this year from the projected **2.6%**. This is weakest performance since **Covid-19** pandemic



The United States will be hitting Iran VERY HARD TONIGHT. At some point in the not too distant future, we will be taking Kharg Island, and other oil infrastructure points, and assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets, much like we have with Venezuela

-Donald Trump, US President

NAVY RECOVERS MISSILE FROM SHIP

The Indian Navy has successfully recovered an unexploded missile warhead from the Marshall Islands-flagged crude oil tanker MT Olympic Life off the Keralam coast. The vessel, sailing from Fujairah in the UAE to Kochi, reported a hull explosion near Oman on 26 May and later detected unexploded ordnance on board.

A specialist team from the Southern Naval Command found the projectile lodged inside a fuel tank after penetrating several compartments.

The team safely extracted the warhead and debris

Women's T20 World Cup begins, India eye trophy

BIRMINGHAM, 11 JUNE

The ICC T20 Women's World Cup is all set to begin here on Friday with the ever-improving India, England and South Africa expected to challenge Australia's traditional dominance in the tournament. After ODI success last year, India is eyeing a maiden T20 World Cup trophy with a stronger and more consistent white ball unit led by Harmanpreet Kaur. Pacers such as Renuka Singh, Kranti Goud and all-rounders such as Deepti Sharma along with a strong batting line-up give them a shot at another title. The matches will be held in England and Wales from 12 to 5 July. A total of 12 teams are divided into two groups of six for the 10th edition. India's first match is against Pakistan at 7pm on 14 June. —Agencies

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CJP begins all-India stir, to protest in B'luru on 14 June

PUNE, 11 JUNE

Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), on Thursday announced a nationwide agitation against the CBSE and NEET exam irregularities. Speaking at the second leg of the protest in Pune, this evening, the CJP chief alleged repeated failures in the conduct of examinations and demanded accountability from Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Dipke also said that after two successful protests in New Delhi and Pune, he would leave for Lucknow for the next leg of the protest which is to be held on Friday. The CJP protest will be held in Amritsar on 13 June, followed by Hyderabad and Bengaluru on 14 June. Dipke has said that the party will begin an indefinite sit-in at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on 20 June if the demand for resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan is not met. —Salar News

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Kin of HP seafarer killed in Hormuz seek return of body

SHIMLA, 11 JUNE

The family of 23-year-old seafarer Aditya Sharma, who was killed in a US military strike on an oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz, has appealed to the Centre and the Himachal Pradesh government to expedite the return of his body for last rites in his native Galore village.

Aditya, a deck cadet on probation and the only son of his parents, was among three crew members killed when the US struck the Palau-flagged tanker MT Settebello in the Gulf of Oman.

Grieving family members have also demanded an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the attack. Aditya's grandfather, Ashok, questioned why the vessel continued its journey despite reported warnings and sought accountability.

His uncle, Sanjiv, said the family learnt on Wednesday night that Aditya was missing and spent hours trying to trace him through the shipping company. Confirmation of his death came only around 1.30 am.

Sanjiv said Aditya had planned to return home in May but extended his stay on the vessel by a month. —*PTI*

Aditya Sharma's family member mourns in Hamirpur — *PTI*

It's either Abhishek or me: Kalyan to Didi

KOLKATA, 11 JUNE

Senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and **MP Kalyan Banerjee** on Thursday issued a blunt ultimatum to party supremo Mamata Banerjee, asking her to choose between nephew Abhishek Banerjee and long-serving party loyalists like him.

This comes amid a deepening crisis in the TMC after party's Assembly election defeat and growing dissent among MPs and MLAs against Abhishek's leadership.

Kalyan, a senior advocate who had been representing Abhishek in a signature forgery case being probed by the CID, announced that he would no longer handle any legal matters involving the TMC national general secretary. He, however, said he would continue to fight cases concerning the party.

Kalyan alleged that Abhishek's aides filed a separate writ petition challenging recent CID searches at the TMC's Kalighat and Camac Street offices without informing him, despite the issue being linked to the forgery case he was handling.

Claiming he had been kept in the dark despite his decades of legal experience, Kalyan accused Abhishek of "arrogance" and having a "fluctuating mindset".

"I will remain in the party only if Abhishek is removed from all leadership positions and retained as an ordinary worker," Kalyan said, adding that Mamata Banerjee must decide whether to stand by her nephew or veteran workers who have spent decades building the party.

Holding Abhishek responsible for the party's electoral setback, Kalyan alleged his leadership style and policies alienated voters and party workers. He said he was among the first TMC leaders to publicly question Abhishek. Kalyan's son, advocate Sirsanya Banerjee, also withdrew from representing Abhishek, citing self-respect. —*PTI*

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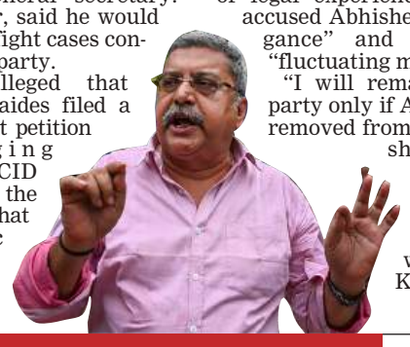

Congress leaders Pawan Khera and Mansoor Ali Khan celebrate with Khan's wife Tasbia Mansoor Khan and brother Maqsood Ali Khan (right) after being elected to Rajya Sabha in Bengaluru on Thursday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

KHARGE, MANSOOR, KHERA ELECTED TO RAJYA SABHA FROM KARNATAKA

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

Three Congress candidates, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan, Congress's Media and Publicity Department chairperson Pawan Khera, were elected unanimously to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka on Thursday.

BJP's M Nagaraja was also elected.

Elections were announced to fill four Rajya Sabha seats from the State because the terms of current members — Iranna Kadadi and Narayana Koragappa (both from the BJP), Mallikarjun Kharge of the Congress, and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda from JD(S) — end on 25 June.

Kharge sought re-election to Parliament's upper house from Karnataka.

Initially, five candidates had filed nominations by Monday, the last day to do so for the election to the State's four Rajya Sabha seats. The polls were scheduled for 18 June.

Members of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly were scheduled to vote in this election at Vidhana Soudha. However, officials said that during scrutiny, the nomination filed by an independent candidate was rejected.

The last date for withdrawing candidature was Thursday. Since only four candidates remained in the fray, they were declared elected unanimously, officials added.

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar congratulated Kharge, Khera, and Khan. "I am confident that they will champion Karnataka's interests in Parliament, effectively voicing the aspirations of our people and working towards the state's continued progress and development," he said. —*PTI*

'THEY ARE NATION BUILDERS'

Homemakers deserve Rs 30,000 pay per month: SC

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court on Thursday recognised homemakers as "nation builders" and ruled that the unpaid domestic work performed by them must be monetised at a minimum of Rs 30,000 per month

A bench of Justices Sanjoy Karol and N Kotiswar Singh delivered the ruling while enhancing compensation in a motor accident case from Punjab involving the death of a woman, Reshma, in 2001.

The court held that "loss of domestic care" would constitute an additional head of damages in compensation claims. It observed that homemakers make invaluable contributions to families and society, and their work cannot be treated as gratuitous or ignored.

"The homemaker builds the nation," the Bench said, stressing that earning members are often more dependent on homemakers than the other way around. It also noted that unpaid caregiving by women contributes an estimated 15–17 per cent of India's GDP, yet remains largely unrecognised.

The judges said the term "housewife" or "homemaker" should, in future, be viewed in recognition of women's role as "nation builders". Quoting economist Sir Cecil Pigou, the court highlighted how domestic work loses economic recognition simply because it is performed without wages.

The case arose after Reshma's husband and three children sought compensation following her death in a road accident on 25 November, 2001. While the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal awarded Rs 2.42 lakh, the Punjab and Haryana High Court later enhanced it to Rs 8.43 lakh with 7.5 per cent interest. The family then approached the Supreme Court seeking further enhancement. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

SC observed that homemakers make invaluable contributions to families and society, and their work cannot be treated as gratuitous —*PIXABAY*

B'luru has 40% migrants: DKS asks for more Central aid

At Niti Aayog meet, DKS calls for 'cooperative federalism'

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday called for "true cooperative federalism" where the States and Centre work together to achieve the Viksit Bharat at the 11th Meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog in New Delhi, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Shivakumar, who ended former chief minister Siddaramaiah's boycott of the programme, highlighted that around 40 per cent of Bengaluru's residents come from other states. "Hence, a strong push for coping with its infrastructural upgradation requires Central assistance," he said, according to a statement.

"The State has identified and started implementing infrastructure projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore in Bengaluru for mobility and making the City climate change resilient," Shivakumar said. "We seek higher support from the Centre under the Urban Challenge Fund or otherwise to support these programmes as Bengaluru retains its status as a global City."

"We believe that the (Centre) and States must work as equal partners in designing solutions tailored to diverse regional realities. Karnataka remains fully committed to partnering with the Government of India and all other States to ensure that growth is inclusive and sustainable," he added.

The CM also made several suggestions, including a one-time infrastructural grant to government schools and colleges to provide quality education on par with the private sector, incentivising states for measurable improvements in nutrition, health, learning outcomes, skilling, employment generation, and sustainability indicators; building resilience against global economic and geopolitical uncertainties through investments in technology, research, and human capital.

He also urged the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to strictly enforce CSR rules, ensuring corporate funds are channelled towards upgrading rural health and education infrastructure within the given time frame. Also, he proposed that industries share their job requirements through a centralised job portal with skill parameters for the next 3 years.

"Bengaluru, being the hub of India's growth, should be given additional infrastructure grants to cope with the increasing demands due to higher migration from other States. We have requested the sanction of Rapid Rail Transit Systems (RRTS) to connect central Bengaluru with neighbouring satellite towns and cities like Kolar, Mysuru, Tumkuru and Chikkaballapura," he added.

On Wednesday, Shivakumar had earlier met Union Urban Development Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and requested early clearance for projects worth Rs 13,549.6 crore, submitted under the Centre's Urban Challenge Fund (UCF). These include an elevated corridor project worth Rs 6,287 crore, nine new sewage treatment plants (STPs) at a cost of Rs 1,350 crore and two packages of the Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) valued at Rs 5,912 crore.

—Salar News with agencies

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar gifts a Basavanna statue to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi, on Thursday —PTI

₹39K CR GARBAGE TENDER

DKS: Mafia agent Ashoka can't handle how transparent I am

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

Lashing out at Leader of Opposition R Ashoka for his allegations of a Rs 10,000 crore kickback in the massive Rs 39,000-crore garbage tender, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the Padmanabhanagar MLA was talking like an "agent of the garbage of mafia".

"I had previously discussed with him the need to control this mafia. I am surprised that Ashoka has now become the spokesperson for the mafia," Shivakumar told reporters on Wednesday in New Delhi.

"We'll load whatever garbage he wants into a lorry and send it to him. Earlier, Kumaraswamy had said the same thing," Shivakumar quipped.

He said that "we couldn't find land anywhere, so it was decided to purchase land near Doddaballapur" and "also acquired land not acquired by NICE".

He dared the BJP to conduct an investigation, stating that he was acting so "transparently" that the Opposition party was "jealous". Ashoka had submitted a complaint to Governor Thawarchand Gehlot seeking an investigation into the tender process.

Home Minister Priyank Kharge echoed the charge, saying that "going to the Governor's house is not the remedy or solution... If you have documents, release them." The Finance Department had earlier raised objects to the tender process that went to a company linked to the Ramky Group.

Ashoka, however, hit back on X. "To cover up the irregularities in tender rules, you (Shivakumar) formed a high-level committee and gave it a one-week deadline to submit its report, which expired today," he claimed. "If there's even a shred of transparency left in you, make that report public right now!"

He said it was his Constitutional duty as the LoP to question the government, and lamented that he did not give Shivakumar a "honeymoon period" after becoming the Chief Minister. "I am a people's agent, not the some mafia agent". *—Salar News*

Siddaramaiah blasts Zameer's supporter in video

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

A video purportedly showing former chief minister Siddaramaiah expressing displeasure with Congress MLA Zameer Ahmed Khan went viral on social media on Thursday. In the clip, Siddaramaiah is seen responding to a supporter who urged him to ensure Khan's induction into the DK Shivakumar-led Cabinet. When the supporter requested a ministerial berth for Khan, Siddaramaiah asked, "Did I ask him to work against the party?" The exchange reportedly took place at Siddaramaiah's Bengaluru residence a few days ago. *—PTI*

Halt tenders for 9 elevated corridors at Rs 3,100cr: BNP

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

The Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) has asked the Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE) Managing Director, GBA Chief Commissioner, and other officials to halt the Rs 3,100 crore tender process for nine elevated corridors in the City. B-SMILE had earlier issued tenders for the projects on Minerva Circle to Hudson Circle and KR Circle, Old Madras Road to Electronics City via Indiranagar, Kogilu Circle to NH-7, and additional corridors along Pipeline Road, Tumakuru Road, Konanakunte Cross, and Kanakapura Road. However, the BNP, argued that the move would significantly impact present day mobility patterns, create more bottlenecks, and could raise risk of flooding. It also sought accountability regarding the reported expenditure of approximately Rs 25.5 crore when preparing the feasibility report *—SALAR NEWS*

Bear attacks farmer in Belagavi forest

BELAGAVI, 11 JUNE

A 25-year-old farmer was attacked by a bear while grazing cattle in the forest near Hulund village, Khanapur Taluk. Mahesh Gavade, who was returning home after taking cattle into the forest, was suddenly attacked by the animal hiding in bushes. He struggled and climbed a tree to escape but was bitten on the leg and held on. After further fighting, Mahesh managed to escape and reached home with serious injuries. He has been admitted to a private hospital in Belagavi for treatment. The incident highlights the ongoing risk of wild animal encounters in the region's forests. *—SALAR NEWS*

Robbery suspect shot in leg during arrest in the City

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

A robbery suspect was shot in the leg after allegedly attacking police with a dagger to resist arrest near Bengaluru, police confirmed on Thursday. The suspect, Jeeva, was wanted for a robbery reported on 2 June at Hebbagodi police station. The victim and friends had been near Tirupalya when Jeeva and associates arrived, assaulted him, and stole his mobile and cash before fleeing. Police received a tip-off about Jeeva's location near Singena Agrahara. When officers tried to arrest him, he attacked with a dagger. Police fired warning shots, and a sub-inspector shot him in the leg, arresting him. Jeeva has seven prior cases *—ANI*

FIFA READY

Fans paint a statue of late Brazilian football legend Pele on the eve of FIFA World Cup at Gowthampura in Bengaluru on Thursday —MOHAMMED ASAD

Govt not stopping Gruha Lakshmi: Cong

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

The government has no intention of discontinuing the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, Karnataka State Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority Vice-Chairman and **MLC Dinesh Gooligowda** said on Thursday.

His clarification came amid allegations by the BJP that the Congress government was removing women from the flagship scheme and imposing fresh conditions on beneficiaries.

Accusing the Opposition of "spreading misinformation", Gooligowda said, "There is no truth in the allegations made by opposition leaders. The government is not stopping the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. The objective is only to ensure that benefits reach eligible beneficiaries and to prevent misuse."

Official data showed that over 1.95 lakh beneficiaries had died, but payments were continuing to be credited to some of their bank accounts due to technical reasons, he said. "The government is taking steps to stop such misuse and ensure proper utilisation of public funds."

The BJP, however, has accused the government of "betraying" women beneficiaries.

"Before the election, it was 'Gruha Lakshmi'; after the election, it has become 'Ineligible Lakshmi'. This is the true face of the Congress guarantees," Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka said in a post on X. *—PTI*

Man kills woman in Koppal, sets her body on fire; arrested

KOPPAL, 11 JUNE

The Kanakagiri police have solved the case of an unidentified woman's body found on the outskirts of Kanakagiri town, in Koppal. The deceased, Ratnamma, 50, was from Karatagi.

Police arrested Shameed, a resident of Kandakur village in Kushtagi taluk, currently residing in Hulihyder village of Kanakagiri taluk. Preliminary probe revealed that Ratnamma and Shameed had known each other for years. The accused allegedly took her to an under-construction house, made her drink alcohol, murdered her, and later set her body ablaze to destroy evidence.

CCTV footage showed Ratnamma walking with Shameed to his house, leading to his detention and interrogation. Community members protested, suspecting the crime involved more than one person. Shameed's criminal background includes previous theft allegations and being caught approaching women in a burqa for thefts, which locals reprimanded. The woman was murdered between 7pm and 10.15pm on 8 June, in an under-construction house.

The accused assaulted her with a brick, then set her body on fire with a blanket to conceal the crime. The police seized the blanket and other items, and invoked the SC/ST (PoA) Act against the suspect. The case was cracked within 36 hours, with the Superintendent of Police praising the team's efforts. *—SALAR NEWS*

Wife, lover held for killing ex-serviceman for Rs 2 cr Insurance

BELAGAVI, 11 JUNE

Police have uncovered the alleged murder of a former serviceman, with investigators claiming his wife conspired with her lover to kill him for a Rs 2 crore insurance payout and to continue their illicit relationship, police confirmed on Thursday. Yamakanamaradi police said the victim, Sandeep Manjare, sustained minor injuries in an accident during the Yamaknamardi fair and was admitted to a private hospital in Ghataprabha, Gokak taluk.

He was reportedly recovering steadily. Investigators allege that the wife, who was the nominee of a large insurance policy taken out by her husband, feared his recovery would hamper her relationship with her lover and her plans to claim the insurance.

Police claim she tampered with saline administered to him, mixing it with disinfectant, which led to his death. Her alleged accomplice is said to have assisted in the crime.

A team led by Inspector Javed Mushapure cracked the case. Evidence of her extramarital relationship emerged during investigation, and during interrogation, both the wife and her lover reportedly confessed to their involvement. Further inquiry is underway. *—PTI*

Nehru-Savarakar comparison: Cong files complaint against BJP

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

The Congress has lodged a police complaint against BJP national General Secretary BL Santhosh over his remarks on former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and urged the State government to take legal action against the spread of misinformation, defamatory content and propaganda targeting Congress leaders and freedom fighters online.

In a complaint to the High Grounds Police Station, Bengaluru West District Congress Committee Vice-President Kushal Haruvegowda alleged Santhosh drew comparisons between Nehru and VD Savarkar, which distorted historical facts and undermined Nehru's contributions.

He said spreading unverified or misleading historical claims could create misconceptions among the public, disturb communal and social harmony and undermine the dignity of national leaders.

Separately, KPCC General Secretary S Manohar submitted a representation to Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge, alleging that people identifying as BJP members were spreading false information against Congress leaders, freedom fighters and eminent personalities. *—PTI*

GTD WILL REMAIN IN PARTY: HD REVANNA ENDS SPECULATION

MYSURU, 11 JUNE

JD(S) leader and former minister HD Revanna told reporters on Thursday that Chamundeshwari's disgruntled MLA GT Devegowda will remain in the party.

GT Devegowda has already met former prime minister and party supreme HD Deve Gowda and conveyed that he will remain in the JD(S), Revanna said in Mysuru.

"Party leaders like Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, State JD(S) working president Sa Ra Mahesh including GT Devegowda will sort out their differences," he added. "GT Devegowda will contest on JD(S) symbol in 2028 assembly polls from Chamundeshwari Constituency. There is no doubt about that."

Revanna also exuded confidence that Congress would not steal the crucial Vokkaliga votes from JD(S), even though community leader DK Shivakumar is Chief Minister.

GT Devegowda, a tall leader, had earlier floated the idea of joining the Congress, miffed with the internal politics in the JD(S). *—Salar News*

'THEY ARE PART OF COMMUNITY'

Citizens cannot relocate strays: GBA

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) stated on Thursday that it was committed to enforcing the Supreme Court guidelines on stray dogs, but clarified that relocating or removing stray dogs by private citizens is an offense.

The Supreme Court had earlier directed civic authorities to house stray dogs – also referred to as community dogs – in shelters owing to a rise in bite cases across the country. It observed that the 2001 Animal Birth Control (ABC) was not being implemented adequately, meaning that sterilisation and vaccination was not happening properly.

However, the GBA clarified in a statement on X that "cruelty towards animals is punishable", and vowed to take legal action against individuals, groups, or associations found harassing, assaulting, or injuring stray animals.

This is likely due to reports of citizens allegedly removing stray dogs from near their residences and moving them elsewhere.

The GBA clarified that relocation of stray animals will be shifted to designated shelters by the five City Municipal Corporations through designated officers.

It stated that designated feeding spots are being set up across all five City Corporations, and said that citizens can contact the GBA 1533 Helpline to find the sites in their areas.

The GBA appealed to "to citizens, apartment owner associations and Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs) to behave... (and) promote community harmony and animal welfare".

"Community dogs are part of our community," the statement clarified. *— Salar News*

IN-SPACE SELECTS 3 INDIAN STARTUPS FOR FUNDING

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

IN-SPACe has selected three Indian space startups for financial support under its Technology Adoption Fund (TAF) scheme aimed at accelerating the development and commercialisation of advanced space technologies.

The firms are Bengaluru-based Astrobase Space Technologies and SatSure Analytics India, and Hyderabad-based TM2SPACE Technologies. The projects were chosen following a multi-stage evaluation by an expert panel comprising members from ISRO, DPIIT, DST, industry, academia and IN-SPACe.

Astrobase will develop an 800 kN reusable liquid rocket engine for future launch vehicles. SatSure will build "Dhaarini", a large Earth observation AI model for applications in agriculture, infrastructure and disaster management. TM2SPACE will develop indigenous AI-powered star tracker systems for satellites.

IN-SPACe Chairman Pawan Goenka said the funding would bridge the gap between technology development and commercial deployment, enabling Indian private firms to emerge as global players in the space sector. The agency will provide technical guidance and milestone-based funding support to the startups. *—PTI*

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Indian firm delivers 106 turbojet drones to Army

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

An Indian defence technology company has delivered 106 turbojet-powered kamikaze drones, called Peacekeeper (Agniveg), to the Indian Army, designed for high-value targets deep inside enemy territory and operating in contested electromagnetic environments. With a range of 180km and speeds up to 450kmph, the drones can autonomously target military infrastructure, logistics hubs, command centres, radar sites, and other strategic targets. SMPP stated, "The system provides the Indian Army with a flexible and cost-effective option for prosecuting time-sensitive targets while reducing risk to personnel." *—PTI*

ED raids ex-YSRCP minister in Andhra liquor scam

HYDERABAD, 11 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate conducted raids on five premises linked to a Rs 195 crore liquor transport scam in Andhra Pradesh. The searches involved former civil supplies minister K Nageswara Rao, his son, and Karumuri Nageswara Rao, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Authorities claim the accused caused a wrongful loss of Rs 195.33 crore to the government exchequer. During raids, Rs 8 lakh in cash, two Rolex watches, vehicles, documents, and digital devices were seized. Officials did not specify which premises the items were recovered from, as investigations continue into the alleged money laundering activities. *—PTI*

—PTI

Former AIADMK minister Benjamin & aides join DMK

CHENNAI, 11 JUNE

P Benjamin, a former minister in the AIADMK government, has defected to the DMK along with his supporters. The ex-minister joined DMK at its headquarters, Anna Arivalayam, in the presence of DMK president MK Stalin, senior leaders TR Baalu, A Raja and RS Barathi, and AIADMK office-bearers including Tiruvallur Central Party District Women's Wing secretary Yamini Ilayaraja and Tiruvallur district students' wing secretary Dinesh. Benjamin, who also served as Chennai Corporation deputy mayor, was part of the cabinets led by the late J Jayalalithaa and Edappadi K Palaniswami. His departure continues the trend of prominent AIADMK leaders leaving the party; days earlier, MC Sampath, NR Sivapathi,] and K Radhakrishnan had joined the ruling TVK. *—PTI*

3 BJP leaders win RS seats after Cong pick barred

Cong alleges 'seat theft', SC says will hear Natarajan today

BHOPAL/NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

BJP on Thursday secured all three Rajya Sabha seats from Madhya Pradesh unopposed after Congress candidate Meenakshi Natarajan's nomination was rejected.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court refused to halt the election process but agreed to hear Natarajan's challenge to the rejection of her nomination on Friday.

Returning Officer Arvind Sharma declared BJP candidates Tarun Chugh, Rajneesh Agarwal and Mahesh Kewat elected. The trio later collected their certificates of election at the Assembly complex in Bhopal.

Natarajan, the Congress's sole candidate, had her nomination rejected on Tuesday for allegedly concealing details of a court complaint filed against her in Telangana in Form 26. The objection was raised by BJP candidate Mahesh Kewat, the party's third Rajya Sabha nominee.

Meenakshi Natarajan *—PTI*

- Natarajan, the Congress's sole candidate, had her nomination rejected on Tuesday for concealing details of a court complaint filed against her in Telangana in Form 26.

A partial working-day Bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Atul S Chandurkar refused to halt the election process or restrain authorities from declaring the results, citing the Supreme Court's ruling in Election Commission of India vs Ashok Kumar (2000), which discourages judicial intervention once the electoral process has begun.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Natarajan, argued that disclosure under Section 33A of the Representation of the People Act is required only in criminal cases punishable with imprisonment of two years or more and where proceedings have progressed beyond the issuance of summons. He contended that no court had taken cognisance of the complaint against Natarajan.

Congress termed the episode "seat theft", claiming there was no criminal case against Natarajan and alleging inconsistency in the application of nomination rules.

BJP holds 164 seats in the 230-member Assembly, while Congress has 62. Although BJP was assured of two Rajya Sabha seats, it fielded a third candidate whose victory would have depended on cross-voting had polling, scheduled for June 18, taken place. *—PTI*

BJP sweeps RS polls in Andhra, Gujarat

BHOPAL/NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

BJP candidates secured a dominant showing in Rajya Sabha elections and bypolls across several states on Thursday, with multiple nominees elected unopposed as opposition parties either stayed out of the contests or lacked the numbers to challenge them.

The BJP won four Rajya Sabha seats each in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh's NDA alliance tally, while its candidates were also elected unopposed in Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Rajasthan.

In Gujarat, BJP nominees Rajubhai Shukla, Mansinh Parmar, Mukesh Rathwa and Jitendra Kanjariya were elected unopposed to four vacancies. In Andhra Pradesh, NDA candidates Bashyam Ramakrishna, Chintakayala Vijay and Sana Satish Babu of the TDP, along with Jana Sena's Lingamaneni Ramesh, were returned unopposed.

Odisha saw BJP nominee Debashish Samantaray, a former BJD MP who joined the saffron party last month, re-enter the Upper House unopposed. Senior BJP leader Tai Tagak was elected unopposed from Arunachal Pradesh, while Manipur BJP chief Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi secured the state's lone Rajya Sabha seat.

In Rajasthan, BJP's Satish Poonia and Alka Gurjar, along with Congress nominee Neeraj Dangi, were elected unopposed. The result keeps Rajasthan's 10 Rajya Sabha seats evenly split between the BJP and Congress.

In Maharashtra, NCP's Rajendra Jain was elected unopposed in a bypoll necessitated by the resignation of NCP chief Sunetra Pawar after her election to the state assembly.

Meghalaya's lone Rajya Sabha seat went to National People's Party leader James K Sangma, brother of Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, who was elected unopposed and pledged to pursue inclusion of Khasi and Garo languages in the Eighth Schedule and implementation of the Inner Line Permit. Separately, nine candidates, including Bhojpuri actor Pawan Singh, Bihar Health Minister Nishant Kumar and BJP leader Sanjay Mayukh, were elected unopposed to the Bihar Legislative Council. *—Salar News*

Congress plans all-India stir over inflation, NEET leak

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi during a meeting at AICC headquarters in New Delhi *—PTI*

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Congress on Thursday said it would challenge the rejection of Meenakshi Natarajan's Rajya Sabha nomination both legally and politically, while announcing plans for a nationwide agitation over inflation, the NEET paper leak and the CBSE OSM controversy.

The issues were discussed during a three-hour meeting of the party's top leadership, attended by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, KC Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Bhupesh Baghel and state unit chiefs. Sources said the agitation would begin later this month and continue for two to three months.

Addressing a press conference, Venugopal termed the rejection of Natarajan's nomination in Madhya Pradesh as "seat chori" (seat theft) and alleged double standards by election authorities. He pointed to a case in Jharkhand where a BJP-backed candidate's nomination was accepted despite incomplete paperwork.

"This reflects the pathetic condition of Indian democracy. We will fight this politically and legally," he said.

> **If one party is not breaking down ideologically, it is the Congress. If there is one party that can fight the RSS-BJP, it is Congress**
>
> -Rahul Gandhi, Cong MP

Kharge said inflation, unemployment, examination scandals and growing social inequality posed serious challenges. Referring to the NEET paper leak and controversies surrounding the education system, he said the trust of millions of students and their families had been shaken. Kharge noted that Rahul Gandhi had personally met affected students and youth and strongly raised their concerns before the nation. He accused the government of weakening democratic institutions and stressed that the Congress' responsibility extended beyond political opposition to safeguarding the Constitution. —PTI

TMC loses third RS MP in a week

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The crisis in the Trinamool Congress (TMC) deepened on Thursday as Rajya Sabha MP Prakash Chik Baraik resigned from both the Upper House and the party, becoming the third TMC parliamentarian to quit this week after Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Sushmita Dev.

Announcing his resignation, Baraik said he was acting in line with the mandate given by West Bengal voters to the BJP. He argued that development required cooperation between the Centre and the state, claiming political differences had hindered progress under both the Left Front and TMC governments. The son of a tea-garden worker, Baraik said he would work under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister-designate Suvendu Adhikari.

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan receives a resignation letter from TMC's Prakash Chik Baraik, in New Delhi *—PTI*

PRATIMA DENIES SIGNING LS LETTER

MonfAmid speculation of a wider revolt, several senior TMC leaders publicly reaffirmed their loyalty to party supremo Mamata Banerjee.

Lok Sabha MP Pratima Mondal denied reports linking her to an alleged group of 19-20 rebel MPs and said her name was being dragged into the controversy without basis.

Actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha, whose name appeared on a purported list of dissidents, declared his unwavering support for Banerjee.

"I was with the TMC and Mamata ji, I am with the TMC and Mamata ji, and I will stay with the TMC and Mamata ji," he said, adding that he would not abandon her in difficult times.

Rajya Sabha MP Babul Supriyo also dismissed rumours of joining any faction or another party, saying it was inappropriate to abandon a ship in troubled waters.

Veteran MP Sougata Roy acknowledged having "small grievances" with the party, including a lack of consultation with senior leaders, but said it would be neither right nor moral to leave during a difficult period. *—PTI*

4,000 EVMs gutted in WB govt building fire, BJP cries foul

KOLKATA, 11 JUNE

Approximately 4,000 EVMs used in recent assembly elections were destroyed in a fire at a government building in south Kolkata's Alipore area. Minister Kaushik Chowdhury said, "It does not appear to be a normal fire," adding investigators are examining whether sabotage was involved. The fire, which started on the second and third floors, affected the seventh and eighth floors without damaging the lower levels. Forensic reports are awaited, and fire services continue cooling the site. The South 24 Parganas administration lodged an FIR, with officials investigating electrical faults or deliberate acts as potential causes. Political reactions have called for further inquiry. *—PTI*

Abhishek appears before CID after HC gives interim protection

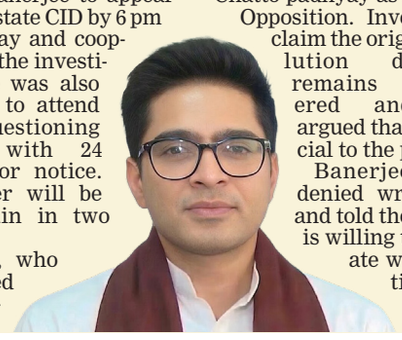
KOLKATA, 11 JUNE

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday granted Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee interim protection from any coercive action in a signature forgery case linked to the appointment of the Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly.

Justice Kausik Chanda directed Banerjee to appear before the state CID by 6 pm on Thursday and cooperate with the investigation. He was also instructed to attend future questioning sessions with 24 hours' prior notice. The matter will be heard again in two weeks.

Banerjee, who had skipped three previous summonses, appeared before the CID headquarters, Bhabani Bhaban, shortly before the court-imposed deadline after returning from Delhi.

The CID is probing allegations by expelled TMC MLAs Ritabrata Banerjee and Sandipan Saha that signatures of legislators were forged on a party resolution appointing Sobhandeb Chatto padhyay as Leader of Opposition. Investigators claim the original resolution document remains unrecovered and have argued that it is crucial to the probe.



Banerjee has denied wrongdoing and told the court he is willing to cooperate with investigators. — *PTI*

FULL-ATTENDANCE NITI MEET

PM flags El Nino risks, urges water conservation

Agri Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, PM Narendra Modi, NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Ashok Kumar Lahiri and Home Minister Amit Shah during the 11th meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog, in New Delhi on Thursday *—PTI*

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged states to remain alert to the risks posed by El Nino conditions, calling for proactive water conservation measures and greater adoption of natural and organic farming to safeguard agriculture and food security.

Addressing the 11th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Modi asked states to expand rainwater harvesting and watershed management programmes and ensure preparedness through assured irrigation, alternative seeds and moisture management support for farmers.

The meeting, attended by chief ministers of all 28 states, marked one of the highest turnouts in recent years. Modi said India could not achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 unless all states progressed together and stressed the need for ease of doing business, district-level GDP estimation and balanced regional development.

He also urged states to leverage India's free trade agreements (FTAs), attract investments from partner countries and focus on emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, data centres and defence manufacturing.

Modi described AI as an opportunity rather than a challenge and also flagged concerns over drug abuse and cyber fraud.

NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Ashok Lahiri said discussions focused on an Inclusive Human Development Framework, energy security and rooftop solar power. He clarified that no discussion took place on examination paper leaks.

TAMIL NADU SEEKS FUNDS, NEET EXEMPTION

In his maiden address, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay assured cooperation with the Centre while seeking the release of Rs 3,284 crore in pending Samagra Shiksha funds without conditions linked to the National Education Policy or the three-language formula. He also reiterated Tamil Nadu's demand for exemption from NEET, sought a second AIIMS in Coimbatore and requested intervention for the release of fishermen detained by Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

NAIDU UNVEILS 'SWARNA ANDHRA 2047'

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu presented the state's "Swarna Andhra 2047" roadmap, highlighting more than Rs 23 lakh crore in investments secured over the past two years.

He also warned of a demographic challenge arising from a fertility rate below 1.5 and called for greater national focus on population sustainability.

TELANGANA PUSHES INFRASTRUCTURE AGENDA

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy emphasised education and healthcare as foundations of development and proposed an "M-6 Task Force" for six major cities, seeking a Rs 6 lakh crore infrastructure fund. He later met Modi and sought central support for metro expansion, transport projects, semiconductor manufacturing, irrigation schemes and an IIM in Hyderabad. *—Salar News*

Hindu vs Muslim politics won't work, says CJP; releases student manifesto

PUNE, 11 JUNE

Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Thursday asked the students to commit that they would never engage in Hindu-Muslim politics in the future.

He added that country has been left behind even as the world moves forward in AI, semicon-ductors and clean energy because of this backward politics. Climate activist, Sonam Wangchuk was part of the protest in Pune (**in pic**).

MANIFESTO FOR STUDENTS

He also unveiled a five-point "exam manifesto" aimed at protecting candidates affected by examination disruptions. The charter seeks compensation of Rs 10,000 for students in cases of paper leaks, examination postponements or delays in result declarations.

Dipke demanded that special trains be arranged during large-scale recruitment drives and that every examination have a backup date, enabling cancelled tests to be conducted within 72 hours. He also called for physical evaluation of answer sheets instead of online assess-ment, age relaxation for candidates affected by delayed examinations, mandatory audits of computer-based testing systems before exams, and merit-based awarding of contracts for conducting examinations.

TEACHER SUSPENDED

Meanwhile, a guest teacher in Haryana's Rohtak district was suspended days after partici-pating in the protest.

An order issued by the District Elementary Education Officer placed Sulekha Dalal under sus-pension with effect from 8 June, though no reason was specified.

Dalal came under public attention after a video of her speech at the Delhi protest went viral.

She said she attended the demonstration solely as a concerned mother, noting that her son had appeared in a recruitment examination allegedly affected by irregularities. *—Salar News*

—INSTAGRAM

SC judge recuses from hearing Jacqueline's plea

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Thursday recused itself from hearing actor Jacqueline Fernandez's plea against a Delhi court order framing charges against her in the Rs 200-crore money laundering case involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar. A Bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and AS Chandurkar directed that the matter be listed before another bench on 25 June after Justice Mishra said his son had appeared for the government in a connected case.A trial court had found a prima facie case against Fernandez, observing that she accepted luxury gifts despite knowing Chandra shekhar's criminal background. Charges were formally framed on 3 June and the trial has commenced. —*PTI*

—ANI

Social media not for defaming: HC to Salman's neighbour

MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

The Bombay High Court ruled that social media does not permit defamatory posts, urging Salman Khan's neighbour to consider deleting his content. Justice Sharmila Deshmukh questioned why grievances should be expressed online instead of through authorities. Ketan Kakkad, owner of property adjoining Khan's farmhouse at Panvel, accused the actor of violating environmental norms and blocking access, claiming to have approached authorities without action. Khan filed a defamation suit after Kakkad posted videos about his activities, alleging they were defamatory and provocative. The court questioned why content was uploaded rather than addressing issues with authorities, suggesting Kakkad delete the posts. The case was adjourned to 6 July. —*PTI*

A year after AI crash, final report yet to see daylight

Pilots' body renews demand for judicial probe into the crash

AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Indian investigators are unlikely to issue a final report into the Air India AI-171 crash by the first anniversary of the tragedy on Friday, with further analysis of the aircraft's engines and engine management systems still under way, according to Reuters.

The London-bound Boeing 787 crashed shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad on 12 June, 2025, killing 260 people, including 241 on board. Only one passenger survived.

A preliminary report released last year found that the aircraft's fuel control switches moved almost simultaneously from "RUN" to "CUTOFF", depriving both engines of fuel. Investigators have since conducted engine tests and examined components in France and the United States. An interim statement is now expected, with a final report likely to take several more months.

The London-bound Boeing 787 crashed after take-off from Ahmedabad on 12 June, 2025, killing 260 people, including 241 on board —*PTI*

On the eve of the anniversary, the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) renewed its demand for a judicial probe and urged authorities not to release an interim report, warning it would fuel speculation. FIP President CS Randhawa said the investigation should be completed before any further findings are published. He alleged that the probe had unfairly focused on pilots and criticised theories linking the crash to pilot action. Randhawa claimed the aircraft had a history of technical issues and argued that investigators had not adequately examined the possibility of electrical failures affecting fuel supply.

—*Agencies*

SC FLAGS PREFERENCE FOR MALE CHILD

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Supreme Court on Thursday expressed concern over the continued preference for male children and the persistent prevalence of sex-selection practices. It said enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act is essential until societal attitudes change.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Prashant Kumar Mishra said schemes such as 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' reflect efforts to combat the systemic bias faced by girls in a deeply patriarchal society.

It said despite progress, several states report sex ratios at birth below national average, highlighting the persistence of gender discrimination. Citing Census data, it said the national child sex ratio declined from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 and to 919 in 2011, underscoring the need for implementation of the PCPNDT Act. It said equality would be achieved only when there is no question of whether a girl child deserves to be born. The observations came while dismissing a doctor's appeal against alleged violations of the PCPNDT Act. —*PTI*

Naga People's Front office burnt down in Manipur over 6 deaths

SENAPATI, 11 JUNE

The Manipur headquarters of the Naga People's Front (NPF) in the Liangmai Taphou area was set ablaze on Thursday amid protests over the deaths of six Naga men who had been missing since 13 May.

The six men were allegedly abducted from Leilon Vaiphei village and their bodies were brought to the mortuary of the Jawaharlal Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) in Imphal early on Thursday under tight security.

Liangmai Naga Council president Timothy Wizunamei said the community was "totally shocked" by the development. He said family members and community leaders had yet to identify the bodies and verify whether they were indeed those of the six missing men.

"We are shattered. We have not identified who is who yet," he told reporters, adding that a decision on formally claiming the bodies would be taken collectively after identification.

Bodies, suspected to be of six people of the Naga community who were abducted from Leilon Vaiphei village in Kangpokpi district on 13 May, being brought at JNIMS mortuary, in Imphal, Manipur —*PTI*

Wizunamei criticised the authorities for the delay in recovering the bodies, saying it had taken 28 days. He also referred to rumours that the bodies may have been mutilated, though he stressed that nothing could be confirmed until the sealed packets were opened. —*ANI*

Cabbie assaults senior citizen for objecting to spitting on road

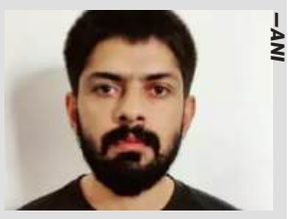
THANE, 11 JUNE

Police have arrested a cab driver for allegedly assaulting a 70-year-old man who objected to him spitting near a mall in Maharashtra's Thane. The incident occurred on Tuesday outside Jupiter Hospital near Viviana Mall and sparked outrage after a video went viral.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis described the incident as "serious" and directed police to take action.

The victim, Sarosh Dastur, was with his wife when he saw the driver, Nishant Dhar Shukla, spitting. When questioned, Shukla abused Dastur and beat him, attempting to hit him with stones and branches. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde told police to invoke attempted murder charges.

Activists tracked down the driver, thrashed him, and handed him over to police. Shukla was arrested on Wednesday. The police lodged an FIR. —*ANI*



—ANI

Bishnoi gang fires outside Guru Randhawa's gym

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Two motorcycle-borne assailants allegedly opened fire at a gym linked to Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa in Delhi's Paschim Vihar area early on Thursday, police said.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police Vikram Singh, the attackers arrived with their faces covered and fired at least seven rounds at the glass facade of the "24 HS Fitness" gym in Pushkar Enclave before fleeing. No injuries were reported.

The gym is owned by two Rajouri Garden residents, while Randhawa is associated with it as a brand ambassador.

Soon after the incident, a social media post purportedly linked to the Anil Pandit group of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang claimed responsibility. The post alleged that Randhawa had ignored earlier warnings and maintained ties with a Bollywood actor.

It also carried threats against the singer and others allegedly opposed to the gang.

A case has been registered. —*PTI*

Unemployed dad must pay for kids: HC

NAGPUR, 11 JUNE

The Bombay High Court has ruled that a father cannot avoid paying maintenance to his minor children by citing unemployment, dismissing a plea seeking reduction of the amount awarded by a family court.

Justice MM Nerlikar of the Nagpur bench upheld a family court order directing the man to pay Rs 4,000 per month towards the maintenance of his two minor children.

The petitioner argued he had earned a livelihood by driving an auto-rickshaw but was forced to sell the vehicle to pay a one-time alimony settlement to his former wife after divorce. He told the court that he was willing to pay only Rs 3,000 per month for the children.

Rejecting the plea, the court said a father's responsibility to maintain his minor children continues regardless of his employment status.

The bench noted that the family court's maintenance award of Rs 4,000 per month could not be considered excessive. —*PTI*

HC gives custody of assault survivor to murder-accused mom

MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

The Bombay High Court ordered custody of a 12-year-old girl, allegedly sexually assaulted by her uncle, to be handed to her mother, saying it is in the child's best interest. The girl was living with her paternal relatives after the mom's arrest last year.

A bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and Ashish Chavan said the child, while in paternal custody, was allegedly abused by her uncle and should live with her mother for "mental support". The court noted that the girl also wishes to stay with her mother, despite being a key witness in her father's murder case.

The mother was arrested for killing her husband with her paramour. She received bail in January this year. —*PTI*

PESTICIDE USE CONCERNS

In a U-turn, Nepal says there's no ban on Indian mangoes

KATHMANDU, 11 JUNE

Nepal has clarified that it has not imposed a ban on the import of Indian mangoes, reversing earlier reports that suggested restrictions due to excessive pesticide levels and inadequate quarantine facilities along the border.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Environment said there were no restrictions on mango imports from India. The Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre said import permissions were being issued in line with demand and existing regulations.

The clarification came after reports in the media and on social media claimed that Nepal had restricted Indian mango imports.

A large consignment of Indian mangoes was recently halted at the Bhittamod quarantine check post in Madhes province over concerns about harmful pests. However, the shipment has since been released after Indian authorities provided a plant health certificate, according to Manish Kumar Pal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives of Madhes Province.

The issue had sparked concern among traders. Bhuvaneshwar Purbe, general secretary of the Fruit and Vegetable Traders' Association in Janakpurdham, had warned that restricting Indian imports could create shortages in Nepal's domestic market. He urged authorities to strengthen quarantine systems and allow imports after proper quality checks rather than impose a ban. —*PTI*

77 CONTACTS IDENTIFIED

Kerala on Nipah virus alert after man test positive

KOZHIKODE,11 JUNE

A Nipah virus infection case has been confirmed in Kozhikode district, prompting the administration to initiate preventive measures on Thursday.

The sample test result from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, confirmed the infection in a 43-year-old man from Ramanattukara, Kozhikode District Collector MS Madhavikutty said.

Health Minister K Muraleedharan said the patient's condition was stable, though he remained on ventilator support Kozhikode Medical College Hospital.

He said 77 people have been identified in the contact list of the man. Of these, 58 are healthcare workers, 14 are family members, and five are friends and colleagues.

None of the contacts has reported any symptoms so far and some are in quarantine, the statement said.

A control room will address public queries. The contact numbers are 0495-2373901 and 9072007767.

Nipah virus is a zoonotic virus capable of transmission between animals and humans. Fruit bats, also known as flying foxes, are the natural reservoir of the Nipah virus. The virus can also cause illness in pigs and humans.

Infection with NiV is associated with encephalitis (swelling of the brain) and can cause mild to severe illness and even death. The document states that Nipah virus infection can be prevented by avoiding contact with sick pigs and bats, and by not consuming raw date palm sap.

The minister said that since 10 May, the patient had visited multiple health institutions and undergone MRI and echocardiography tests. He added that people need to be cautious between May and September as it is fruit bats' mating season —*PTI*

Shigella cases rise to nine in Wayanad

One more case of Shigella infection has been confirmed in a school in Kerala's Wayanad district, increasing the total to nine. The medical officer said 14 samples were collected from 514 students with symptoms; nine tested positive, with five results pending. Besides the initial 514 students, 38 more students and 27 adults who had contact with the infected have also developed symptoms. Forty-five infected individuals are hospitalised, but all are stable. Containment measures, awareness campaigns, and water disinfection are underway. —*PTI*

Ajmer's Chishty represents India at global meet

RABAT, 11 JUNE

Haji Syed Salman Chishty, the 26th-generation Gaddi Nashin and hereditary key custodian of the Dargah of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishty at Ajmer Sharif, represented India at the first International Congress on Feminine Sufism held in Rabat, Morocco.

Organised by the Académie du Royaume du Maroc and Waliyat ONG Internationale, the two-day gathering brought together Sufi leaders, scholars and academics from across the world under the theme, 'Awake Memory — Light the Future'.

Chishty addressed two key panels, highlighting the role of women in the Sufi tradition and the Chishty order's enduring message of peace. In a presentation on women in Indian Sufism, he traced an unbroken spiritual lineage from Hazrat Bibi Amina, Hazrat Bibi Maryam, Hazrat Khadija, Hazrat Aisha and Hazrat Fatima az-Zahra to the renowned Sufi mystic Rabia al-Basri, before focusing on Chishty women saints such as Bibi Hafiza Jamal and Bibi Fatima Sam. He highlighted their contributions to preserving spiritual traditions and spreading the message of divine love, noting that their shrines in Ajmer and Delhi continue to draw millions of devotees.

Speaking on peace-building, he showcased the Chishty principle of "Peace with All" and the centuries-old tradition of langar at Ajmer Sharif as a living model of interfaith harmony.

The langar is sacred community kitchen, which serves free, meals daily to thousands of devotees irrespective of their religion.

His participation was seen as a significant moment in India's spiritual diplomacy, reflecting the global influence of the Chishty tradition. —*Salar News*

Rs 370 biryani remark: Comedian More, Jangra booked, NCW fumes

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Maharashtra Cyber police have registered a case against stand-up comedian Pranit More, web developer Himanshu Jangra and others for allegedly disseminating "obscene and objectionable" content on social media, and summoned them for an inquiry, an official said on Thursday. The case was registered at the Nodal Cyber Police Station.

The controversy erupted after Jangra recounted a date during which he spent Rs 370 on a plate of chicken biryani. He then suggested that the amount entitled him to sexual favours when the woman asked to be dropped home. More was seen laughing at the remarks during the show.

Another clip from the same show featured Dr Sejal Pawar making derogatory comments regarding medical cadavers and deceased male bodies used for educational purposes, which authorities flagged as highly disrespectful to the dignity of the deceased, he said.

This triggered outrage online. Both More and Jangra apologised, Jangra deactivated his Instagram account. A Gurugram-based company also terminated Jangra's employment over the remarks. Maharashtra Cyber Police have registered a case against More.

Earlier, National Commission for Women summoned More and Jangra.

NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar wrote to the Haryana Director General of Police seeking action. The police have also warned citizens against sharing the controversial material, noting that downloading or disseminating obscene content could invite strict legal action under IT and criminal laws. —*PTI*

Women's T20 WC 2026 begins

IT'S BIGGER & MORE COMPETITIVE THAN EVER

The ICC T20 Women's World Cup begins in Birmingham on Friday with the ever-improving India, England and South Africa expected to challenge Australia's traditional dominance in the tournament.

The Aussies, who have won six of the last nine tournaments, will be eager to displace reigning champions New Zealand for a seventh title, but that is no longer a yawn-inducing formality.

The Kiwis themselves are a formidable unit, and then there are India, who landed their maiden global title last year in the 50-over World Cup.

England, strong as ever in home conditions, and South Africa, finalists in the last three ICC events, would be no pushovers either.

In that context, this iteration of the showpiece, beginning with a match here between England and Sri Lanka, is the most open yet in its existence, and it is also the first World Cup in the UK since the first edition in 2009.

The event is also the biggest in terms of the number of participants - 12 - with the addition of Ireland and Netherlands to the mix from 2024.

That expansion itself is a sign of the women's game getting a stronger foothold across nations, but even more satisfying is the development of a level-playing field and the emergence of some raw but exciting talent.

YOUNG TALENT

It starts with England's Alice Capsey, Tilly Corteen-Coleman and Freya Kemp while their opponents tomorrow, Sri Lanka, field the likes of Vishmi Gunarathne, Imesha Dulani, Kavisha Dilhari and Kawya Kavindi.

New Zealand skipper Amelia Kerr, one of the youngest leaders in the international circuit at 25, is a key player for her side. She is also a heart-touching story of resilience after surviving depression and suicidal thoughts during the 2020-21 season.

Strong contenders India come with promising N Sree Charani, Yastika Bhatia and Nandani Sharma in their ranks.

The Aussies are still banking on their veterans to reclaim the title, but they also have two exceptional young stars in their ranks - batter Georgia Voll and left-arm seamer Lucy Hamilton.

The Proteas, led by the redoubtable Laura Wolvaardt, have Kayla Reyneke and Annerie Dercksen leading the march of Next-Gen players, despite bringing back experienced pacer Shabnim Ismail and Dan van Niekerk from retirement.

The outings of these relatively fresh names will be watched keenly as they are tasked with taking the exploits of a glorious set of players, who are on the last leg of their illustrious careers.

AUSTRALIA THE TEAM TO BEAT

Despite not defending an ICC title for the first time since 2017, Australia still have the aura of the past, the Antipodeans are still the team to beat.

It is primarily because a slew of battle-hardened players are leading their campaign.

The likes of Beth Mooney, Tahila McGrath, Ellyse Perry, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Annabel Sutherland and Megan Schutt are familiar with every contour of white ball game.

The selection of Sophie Molineux as captain might not have elicited a unanimous reaction from players, particularly from Gardner, but they need to push the past behind and work together for a greater goal.

It's not something beyond the Aussies.

RISE OF INDIA

The biggest impediment in their way will be India, now a stronger and more consistent white ball unit.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will be keen to emulate Australia in becoming the second side to hold the 50-over and T20 World Cups at the same time.

Pacers like Renuka Singh, Kranti Goud and seasoned all-rounders such as Deepti Sharma along with a very strong batting line-up give them a realistic shot at having another world title in just over seven months.

The ODI World Cup triumph marshalled by almost the same squad might have also eased the anxiety in the Indian camp.

THE SURPRISE PACKAGE

Some other teams like Sri Lanka, the West Indies and the newcomers Ireland do not have the burden of expectations, and that might inspire them to take on the favourites with no fear.

An underdog scripting a marvellous run will just suit the newfound openness of this tournament too. – *PTI*

Match on 12 June	England vs Sri Lanka	Match starts at 11pm IST

WAIT IS ON THEN FOR A MAGICAL 5 JULY AT THE LORD'S

Teams (from): England: Nat Sciver-Brunt (c), Lauren Bell, Alice Capsey, Tilly Corteen-Coleman, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Lauren Filer, Dani Gibson, Amy Jones, Freya Kemp, Heather Knight, Linsey Smith, Issy Wong, Danni Wyatt-Hodge.

Sri Lanka: Chamari Athapaththu (c), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunarathne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Imesha Dulani, Nilakshika Silva, Kaveesha Dilhari, Hansima Karunarathne, Kaushini Nuthyangana, Sugandika Dassanayaka, Nimasha Madushani, Kawya Kavindi, Malki Madara, Mithali Ayodhya, Chethana Vimukthi.

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڵار

7 in 10 refugees live in long-term displacement

The UN refugee agency said forced displacement of people due to conflict or persecution fell in 2025 for the first time in a decade. But the agency warned in its annual report on Thursday that 118 million people who had to flee their homes or nations is still alarmingly high.

A look at the agency's Global Trends Report on refugees and displaced people, by the numbers:

118 million people were displaced by conflict, persecution last year

7 OUT OF 10

Seven out of 10 refugees have lived in exile for five years or more, often trapped in sprawling camps in poor nations. "Humanitarian assistance has saved lives," High Commissioner for Refugees Barham Salih said, adding that "it was never intended to sustain generations of people indefinitely." The agency aims to slash by half the number of refugees in protracted displacement who are dependent on humanitarian assistance by 2035.

118 MILLION

The total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict, violence or persecution at the end of 2025 was 117.8 million. The figure includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and other groups in need of international protection. It's the first time in a decade the statistic fell. Behind the decline is both an increase in people who returned home and the fact that many refugees acquired citizenship of their host countries, among other reasons, said Tarek Abou Chabake, the UN agency's chief statistician.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees warned the number of those displaced globally, mostly by conflict, was unacceptably high.

39 PER CENT

Percentage of children among 41.6 million refugees last year. While Colombia, Germany and Turkey hosted more than 2 million refugees each, the majority live in low- to middle-income countries. Despite a 3 per cent fall from the previous year, 5.4 million people crossed an international border in 2025 seeking refuge.

68.7 MILLION

The number of internally displaced people. The ongoing war in Sudan was behind the largest displacement in the world with 9.1 million people forced to flee their homes. Colombia, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan also have large displaced populations.

Projections for 2026 did not look much better. With the Iran war erupting in February, 3.2 million people had been displaced by March inside Iran, and by mid-May, 1 million were displaced inside Lebanon. "This is truly unacceptable and we must make sure this doesn't become a new normal," Salih said.

Three countries - Syria, Afghanistan and Sudan - saw 90 per cent of the 4.4 million refugee return home in 2025. The number was the second highest since UNHCR began keeping records six decades ago. Another 10.3 million internally displaced people returned to their areas of origin last year. But Salih warned that many of those who went back did so under pressure and without basic infrastructure and conditions for a dignified life. "Voluntary returns to post-conflict Syria and returns under pressure to Afghanistan are not the same thing," Salih said.

4.5 MILLION

The number of stateless people, of which the Rohingya from Myanmar make up the largest group. The majority of the stateless people live in Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Thailand and Myanmar. Only 46,000 acquired citizenship in 2025.

82,000

The number of refugees resettled, which fell sharply from 188,000 in 2024. That's a fraction of those in need, Salih said, as he urged governments to expand legal pathways for refugees to be relocated. "Every dangerous sea crossing and every death in the desert represents a failure of the international community," Salih said. "The human cost of the failure is measured not with statistics but with lives." – *PTI*

The total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict, violence or persecution at the end of 2025 was 117.8 million —***UNHCR***

OSM portal was not thoroughly tested for security threats: IIT panel

- One of the key observations of the IIT panel, constituted following the controversy surrounding the OSM portal, was that the original portal had undergone an audit, but the process was not comprehensive enough, and several critical vulnerabilities remained undetected.

CBSE's recent rollout of a digital evaluation system for Class 10 and 12 board exams saw evaluation errors and was followed by widespread student protests and political backlash —***ANI***

The On-Screen Marking (OSM) portal, used for evaluating the Class XII answer sheets of lakhs of students, was not "thoroughly" tested and did not undergo a "sufficient" assessment of its functionality, security vulnerabilities, and potential threats before deployment, a member of the IIT panel auditing the CBSE post-result ecosystem told ANI.

The IIT panel, constituted following the controversy surrounding the OSM portal, is expected to submit its report to the Education Ministry on its findings and recommendations in the coming days.

Officials from IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur worked closely with the CBSE and other agencies like Digital India Corporation (DIC) to find out vulnerabilities in the CBSE post-exam ecosystem.

After identifying multiple vulnerabilities in the OSM portal, the IIT panel assisted in the development of a new examiner-facing portal using the base code of the now-discontinued system. The new portal is currently being used for the verification and re-evaluation of answer sheets.

One of the key observations of the panel was that the original portal had undergone an audit, but the process was not comprehensive enough, and several critical vulnerabilities remained undetected.

"It was not thoroughly tested. It is not like it (the portal) was not tested, there was an auditor hired by CBSE who tested it and gave its go ahead and everything. But a through analysis was not done, that should have been done. The auditing was not sufficient," the member of the IIT panel told ANI on the condition of anonymity.

The portal was created and managed by a private IT service provider named Coempt Eduteck, which is at the centre of the Class XII result controversy.

The IIT panel member referred to the findings of 19-year-old ethical hacker Nisarga Adhikary from West Bengal, who independently identified several vulnerabilities that were also observed during the IIT panel's assessment.

"The auditing was done, and some vulnerabilities were found, but several others were missed. Systems handling critical data require deeper and more rigorous security analysis," the panel member said.

Nisarga had highlighted severe flaws in the portal, including vulnerabilities that allowed OTP bypass, access to examiner accounts through a hardcoded master password, and potential access to millions of students' answer sheets.

Explaining the kind of security assessment required for such sensitive platforms, the IIT panel member said that advanced security practices, including vulnerability assessment, penetration testing, and Red Team-Blue Team exercises, should be carried out to stress-test the system's defences.

"Cybersecurity operations involve offensive and defensive functions. There are Red Teams and Blue Teams that attempt to identify weaknesses and strengthen the system. All these mechanisms need to be employed to thoroughly examine a platform of this scale," the member said

The recommendation for deeper and multi-layered security audits of sensitive digital platforms will be part of the IIT panel's report to the ministry.

"Portals that are exposed to the external world need to be thoroughly tested for functionality, threats and security. We will be giving these recommendations more specifically in our report," the panel member said.

The member also clarified that while the ethical hacking incident exposed serious vulnerabilities, there was no evidence to suggest that student records had been leaked or misused

"I spoke to Nisarga. He was able to download some data, but deleted it. We have not observed any evidence of records being leaked outside. It was an ethical hack," the member said.

When asked whether the newly developed portal could be used for the next examination cycle, the IIT panel member described it as "a kind of patchwork" and indicated that a more robust and long-term solution would be required.

On the lessons for the future and whether CBSE can conduct the entire digital evaluation process in-house without involving private vendors, the member said that the Board currently does not have the required technical expertise to independently build and manage such large-scale systems and would need to engage external agencies.

"CBSE cannot do everything in-house and completely avoid involving third parties. It does not have that level of expertise. They need to engage with specialised organisations," the member said.

The panel member stressed that the most important lesson from the OSM controversy was that CBSE must retain greater control over its data and ensure that any platform handling sensitive examination records undergoes a comprehensive security assessment before deployment

"The first thing needed is that CBSE should have control over the data. There has to be a thorough security analysis, which was not done adequately in this case," the member said. – *ANI*

Sri Lankan families protest Easter blast probe

COLOMBO, 11 JUNE

Relatives of 2019 Easter Sunday bombing victims protested in Katuwapitiya against opposition efforts to hinder the investigation. The attacks on 21 April, 2019, targeted churches and hotels, killing 270, including 11 Indians. St Anthony's church was worst hit with 117 deaths. Human rights activist Brito Fernando urged, "No one should try to interfere in the investigations." Protestors accused opposition groups of attempting to influence the probe. The protest ended after three days, following a court's decision to appoint a panel to assess Suresh Sallay's torture claims. Fernando noted, "for the first time in seven years, the investigations were making headway." Police Minister Ananda Wijepala claimed Sallay led the conspiracy to help the Rajapaksas, then in opposition, to make a political comeback. —*PTI*

Thailand sentences 2 to death over 2015 bombing

BANGKOK, 11 JUNE

A Thai court sentenced two Uyghur men to death over the 2015 bombing at Bangkok's Erawan shrine, which killed 20 and injured over 120. Yusufu Mieraili and Bilal Mohammad were arrested shortly after the August 17 attack. They faced charges including murder, attempted murder, and illegal explosive possession, with evidence linking them through video and fingerprints. Mieraili shouted he was innocent, saying, "I mourn for Thailand," and asked for help. Both claimed mistreatment and torture, but judges found no evidence of coercion. Human rights groups criticised the trial's procedures, alleging violations. Authorities believe Mieraili detonated the bomb after Bilal left a backpack containing the device at the shrine.—*PTI*

Police spray water cannons as Belfast protests continue

BELFAST, 11 JUNE

olice used water cannons against protesters in Belfast on Wednesday during a second night of unrest linked to a stabbing allegedly involving a Sudanese immigrant. Masked demonstrators hurled bricks, rocks and bottles at riot police, while some tore bricks from walls and used dismantled fencing as makeshift shields. The violence followed the court appearance of 30-year-old Hadi Alodid, who was charged with attempted murder, possession of a knife and making threats to kill after a stabbing that left Stephen Ogilvie blinded in one eye. Police said they were braced for further disturbances after several homes believed to house immigrants were set ablaze.—*PTI*

—*PTI*

Kanye West accused of sexually assaulting model

LONDON, 11 JUNE

A model, Jennifer An, has accused Kanye West of choking her and simulating oral sex during a 2010 music video shoot, describing feeling "suffocated, unsure and scared". An, a former America's Next Top Model contestant, alleges West took over the set at the Chelsea Hotel, New York, and assaulted her after arriving unexpectedly. She said West "couldn't remember his lines", then "reached a hand out and started choking me, and I'm just not sure what's happening". The incident ended with West shouting "this is art, I'm Picasso" and leaving. West's lawyers argue it was an "intense and provocative theatrical performance". An has filed a lawsuit in New York City, with the case pending. —*AGENCIES*

In a now deleted post, Bahrain on Thursday showcased the damages caused by Iran's drone strikes, where a 11-year-old girl was injured —X*@MOI_BAHRAIN*

Iran closes Hormuz to everyone again

As Trump ups rhetoric, US Iran trade strikes

TEHRAN, 11 JUNE

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said the Strait of Hormuz will be "closed to all vessels" and warned that any ship attempting to pass through the waterway could be targeted as Washington and Tehran continued to trade strikes on Thursday.

Nearly a fifth of the world's oil once flowed through the Strait. It is unclear what Iran's statement meant, and if ships paying its "fee" could still traverse the waterway.

This comes as US and Iran continued to send barrages of drones and missiles at each other, pushing the region closer to the resumption of a full-scale war.

The American attack appeared more intense and wider than the day before. The bulk of the attacks hit the southern parts of Iran, including in and around Bandar Abbas, Sirik, Qeshm Island and Hengam Island. Iran struck Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait. A 11-year old girl was injured in Bahrain, while Kuwait shut its airspace briefly.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump renewed threats to "take" Iran's crucial Kharg Island.

"My preference has always been to take Kharg Island," Trump said on Fox News. "I don't know that America has the stomach for it to be honest."

He had earlier claimed that he had been sneaking oil out of Iran, but there was little to corroborate the statement.

Notably, taking the island, where much of Iran's oil processing facilities are, would require putting boots on the ground.

US' CENTCOM has been posting photographs of its soldiers training for direct combat. "If I wanted to we could put a small group of soldiers and take over the place," Trump added.

'IRAN WILL COMPENSATE FOR EVERYTHING'

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent posted on X that "every attack Iran launches will only deepen the economic and financial consequences it faces". He said that any damages Tehran causes to Gulf and all tolls paid to the Persian Gulf Strait Authority allies will be paid for by funds "extracted from Iran's accounts", likely a reference to the billions of dollars worth of frozen Iranian assets.

PAK PUSHES FOR PEACE

Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Thursday that the US attacks had "effectively rendered the ceasefire ... meaningless," without saying it was abandoning it. Pakistan meanwhile, said it remained actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions.

WON'T FORGET THE KURDS

Trump said that he would not "forget" the Kurds. The US had tried arming Iranian protesters in January through Kurdish groups in Iraq, but Trump said they stole the weapons. He said the "Kurds let us down". —*Agencies*

> **I don't think (conflict between Israel and Turkey) will happen as long as I'm president because he (Turkish President Recep Erdogan) respects me**
>
> Donald Trump, US President

> **Early warnings only matter if the world acts on them. We warned that this crisis could push millions more people into hunger; now we are watching it happen in real time**
>
> Jean-Martin Bauer, Director of WFP's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service

Saudi lifts ban on Lebanese imports after five years

In an attempt to rebuild Lebanon-Gulf ties, Saudi Arabia announced on Wednesday that the Kingdom was ending a self-imposed five-year ban on products from Lebanon. Saudi had banned Lebanese fruits and vegetables in 2021, saying they ere used to smuggle drugs, and then later extended it to all products. The bans, however, were seen as a jab at regional rival Iran, which supports the Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

We're at war with Hezbollah, not Lebanon: Bibi

TEL AVIV, 11 JUNE

In a striking revelation on Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "Israel is not at war with the people of Lebanon".

He called upon the Lebanese people to "join Israel" and dismantle the Hezbollah militant group, which, he said, Israel was at war with. He said that Hezbollah had taken Lebanon "hostage" on Iran's bidding and was using Lebanese soil to launch attacks on Israel.

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah began firing rockets at Israel after the US-Israel assassinated Iran's former supreme leader and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the initial days of the war.

"Hezbollah is weaker than ever. Israel is stronger than ever. We've taken out nearly 10,000 Hezbollah terrorists so far. We're systematically clearing out South Lebanon of these fanatics. No matter where they are, we'll find them," Netanyahu said in the video message.

Israel has forcibly displaced nearly a million people from Southern Lebanon, and seized nearly 15 per cent of Lebanese territory to set up a "security zone".

On average, Israeli forces killed more than one child every day since 17 April, Human Rights Watch stated, with the total toll of people killed hovering around 3,711.

HRW stated that nearly 50,000 people were sent out of Beirut's suburbs – a critical Hezbollah stronghold – and that 34,000 families were displaced South and Nabatieh Governorates.

"Israel will do whatever it takes to protect our families, our communities," Netanyahu stated.

Lebanon's state-run National News agency reported "intensified" airstrikes in southern Lebanon, with Israel's military using the opportunity to advance further into the country. —*Salar News*

'ISRAELI DRONES USE CHILDREN'S CRIES TO LURE CIVILIANS'

Israeli drones are reportedly broadcasting the sounds of children crying to lure civilians out of their homes, first responders and civilians told the Middle East Eyes. The Israeli military had used similar tactics in Gaza, where they blasted children's cries on loudspeakers to lure people out of their homes, the report stated. One source in southern Lebanon said that the quadcopters have also used the sounds of ambulances, the Quran and women.

'1.3M Lankans may go hungry due to Hormuz closure'

COLOMBO, 11 JUNE

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that up to 1.3 million additional Sri Lankans could struggle to meet basic food needs due to the closure of Strait of Hormuz and rising fertiliser prices.

According to a new WFP analysis, the figure is in addition to an estimated 4.7 million Sri Lankans already requiring food assistance in 2026. Sri Lanka was among three countries examined in the report, alongside Somalia and Afghanistan.

The agency said the island nation remains highly vulnerable because it depends on West Asia for 63 per cent of its energy needs, receives 44 per cent of remittances from Gulf countries and sends 45 per cent of its tea exports to the region.

"Wages are increasingly stretched as food, fuel, and fertiliser costs soar, meaning families are increasingly unable to afford the quality and quantity of food needed," the WFP added.

Earlier in March, the UN agency had projected that 45 million people worldwide could fall into acute food insecurity if the conflict continued and oil prices remained around USD 100 per barrel through the end of June. "This scenario is now unfolding," it said. —*PTI*

Sri Lanka imports roughly 60 per cent of its total energy needs (and all of its oil) from West Asia. Hormuz is also critical for fertilisers —*AI*

Israel to set up 61 new settlements in West Bank

WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

The Israeli Cabinet is expected to approve a plan on Thursday that looks to fund the de facto establishment of 61 new settlements in the West Bank, Axios journalist Barak Ravid said on Thursday, citing a draft government decision.

In a post on X, he claimed that with global attention focusing on Iran, the Israeli government is expected to allocate more than $350 million over several years to move 61 newly authorised settlements from paper to reality, citing sources.

"The proposal is being championed by far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich," he said.

Meanwhile, UN Chief Antonio Guterres in a post on X expressed concern over reports of "settler violence coming from the occupied West Bank: the demolition of homes, relentless expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, ongoing displacement of Palestinians, the threat of an attempted annexation that would - like the decades-long occupation - have no legal validity." He called for a two-state solution to the issue. —*ANI*

UK Defence Secy quits over funding

LONDON, 11 JUNE

Britain's Defence Secretary John Healey resigned on Thursday, saying the government's proposed defence spending plans did not provide the armed forces with the resources they needed and could make the country "less safe".

Healey posted a resignation letter on X in which he said Prime Minister Keir Starmer had been "unable" and the Treasury "unwilling" to commit the resources needed to address "rising threats".

"I am now left with no other option than to submit my resignation as your Defence Secretary," Healey wrote.

The Defence Investment Plan (DIP), which has yet to be published, is intended to outline future defence spending and investment priorities.

Healey said demands on defence had risen further due to conflict in West Asia, Britain's leadership of the multinational Strait of Hormuz military mission and NATO's Arctic Sentry mission, increased Russian activity towards the UK and NATO nations, and increased attacks in Ukraine.

He said the government had sought a Defence Investment Plan that would address immediate operational demands and set a clear path towards meeting what he described as a NATO commitment to spend 3.5 per cent of GDP on defence by 2035. However, Healey said the funding settlement presented to him this week "falls well short of what is required for defence and the country at this dangerous time".

The proposed plan would raise defence spending to just 2.68 per cent of GDP by 2030, compared with 2.6 per cent expected next year, he claimed. —*PTI*

TRUMP'S WH UFC TO COST $60 MILLION

US President Donald Trump's planned UFC fight on the White House's South Lawn has required a monumental effort from more than seven federal agencies, hundreds of staff working onsite daily and at least USD 60 million, according to a legal filing. The event is part of the 250th anniversary of America's founding and is scheduled to take place on Sunday, featuring seven mixed martial arts matches.

22 confirmed dead in PoK crash

ISLAMABAD, 11 JUNE

Pakistan confirmed that all 22 security personnel aboard a Mi-17 helicopter that crashed in Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoK) were killed, as protests continued in the region. Funerals for the deceased were held in the capital Muzaffarabad.

In a brief statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistan military said that the accident occurred "during take-off due to a technical fault" on Wednesday. Sources said those killed included 19 soldiers, one army major and two colonels.

The crash occurred as protests had rocked the region over representation for Kashmiri refugees from India.

On Wednesday, thousands of people from various parts of PoK gathered in Rawalakot and raised slogans against what they described as Pakistan's continued occupation and policies in the region. Dozens of people were killed in the violence. —*Agencies*

An army MI-17 helicopter crashed due to a technical fault, in PoK on Wednesday —*PTI*

Canada introduces bill to restrict social media for under-16s

OTTAWA, 11 JUNE

Canada has introduced a bill that would restrict access to social media platforms for children under the age of 16, while allowing companies to seek exemptions if they can demonstrate adequate safeguards for young users.

Bill C-34, introduced on Wednesday by Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Marc Miller, would also regulate artificial intelligence chatbot services, such as ChatGPT, and introduce new safety requirements for online platforms, according to an official statement.

While laws exist in Canada to respond once harm has occurred, there is currently little that requires online services to prevent harm in the first place, the statement said. The proposed Safe Social Media Act aims to change that by ensuring social media services and AI chatbot providers are responsible for addressing harm before it occurs, it said.

If passed, the Canadian legislation would also place responsibility on websites to protect children from harmful content, including cyberbullying or harassment carried out through digital platforms.

Australia is the only country to have enacted a nationwide law restricting social media access for under-16s. Countries including the UK, France, Greece, Spain and Malaysia have considered, proposed or developed similar measures aimed at improving children's online safety. —*PTI*

'SEX PARTIES TO BLACKMAIL'

Indian-American held for defrauding bank of $100M

WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

A 44-year-old Indian-American man has been arrested in California for allegedly defrauding a bank of nearly USD 100 million by manipulating title insurance records and concealing the true status of real-estate-backed loans.

Mahender Makhijani, a Green Card holder residing in Corona del Mar, was taken into custody on a federal criminal complaint. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

Makhijani controlled Newport Beach-based Cantor Group V LLC, which had a lending arrangement with a federally insured bank, officials said. Investigators alleged that between September 2024 and April 2025, he falsified title insurance policies to falsely show that his company held first-lien positions on properties used as collateral. Authorities said the forged records were submitted to the bank to secure funding, while Makhijani allegedly misrepresented facts during discussions with bank officials. Investigators also accused him of using shell companies to conceal the alleged fraud.

According to documents cited by the New York Post, he allegedly hosted private parties involving drugs and sex workers, some attended by bank employees and associates. Prosecutors claim he used knowledge of activities at those gatherings to pressure participants. —*PTI*

Zee Entertainment okays Rs 2,300 cr capital raise

NEW DELHI, 10 JUNE

Media and entertainment major Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) is planning to raise at least Rs 2,300 crore in one or more tranches to support strategic and business initiatives. "The Board of Directors, at its meeting held on 10 June, approved the raising of capital by the company of a minimum Rs 2,300 crore," ZEEL said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday. The company, however, did not specify the mode through which the funds would be raised. Earlier this month, ZEEL announced an eight-year partnership with FIFA to broadcast all its matches in the Indian market. ZEEL will bring 39 FIFA global football events, including the FIFA World Cup 2026, which kicks off on 11 June.—*PTI*

Rupee slumps 50p to close at 95.75 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

The rupee plunged 50 paise to settle at 95.75 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday amid heightened tensions in West Asia and a stronger greenback. Heavy FII outflows and weak sentiments at the domestic equity markets put further pressure on the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.55 against the greenback and traded in the range of 95.55 to 95.76 before settling at 95.75 (provisional), down 50 paise from its previous close. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 100.07, up 0.13 per cent. —*PTI*

Oil India, Canada's PTRC sign clean energy pact

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Oil India Ltd (OIL) and Canada's Petroleum Technology Research Centre (PTRC) have signed a collaboration framework to jointly explore carbon capture, geothermal energy and other clean energy technologies, the companies said. The agreement aims to deepen energy cooperation between India and Canada as both countries pursue energy transition and sustainability goals. The framework was signed on 10 June in Calgary between PTRC, a Saskatchewan-based not-for-profit energy research organisation, and OIL, a Maharatna public sector enterprise under India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The two organisations will also evaluate potential geothermal projects and undertake joint research. —*PTI*

Crude oil slips nearly 2% as war escalates

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Crude oil prices declined nearly 2 per cent to Rs 8,575 per barrel in futures trade on Thursday as traders booked profits after the recent rally, tracking a weak trend in the global markets amid escalating Gulf war. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude oil contracts for June delivery fell by Rs 151, or 1.73 per cent, to Rs 8,575 per barrel in a business turnover of 8,887 lots. Market participants said both contracts opened on a firm note but later slipped into the negative territory. In the international markets, Brent crude futures for August delivery declined 0.58 per cent to USD 92.56 per barrel. —*PTI*

Govt waives excise duty for higher ethanol fuel

No excise duty on petrol blended with 22-30% ethanol

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The government has extended excise duty exemption to petrol blended with higher levels of ethanol, according to a government notification.

Excise duty has been reduced to nil on petrol containing 22 per cent, 25 per cent, 27 per cent and 30 per cent ethanol blends, expanding the existing exemption that was available for blends of up to 20 per cent ethanol.

Officials said the move should not be interpreted as an immediate rollout of higher ethanol blends in the retail market. The exemption is a regulatory requirement because blending ethanol with petrol at fuel depots is considered a manufacturing activity that could otherwise attract excise duty.

Till E20 (20 per cent ethanol doped in petrol), this was exempted by the Finance Ministry. The extension of the tax waiver to E22 (blend of 22 per cent ethanol and 78 per cent petrol), E25, E27 and E30 blends is a preliminary step that would facilitate any future introduction of higher ethanol-content fuels, officials said.

Any rollout would be subject to extensive testing and consultations before implementation.

The measure is aimed at encouraging the use of ethanol-blended petrol as India seeks to reduce dependence on imported crude oil and increase the share of biofuels in its energy mix.

The notification comes as fuel prices remain under pressure. The federal government in March cut excise duties on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre, sacrificing more than Rs 1 lakh crore in annual revenue. The move comes as fuel prices cross Rs 100 in all cities. —*PTI*

Officials said the move should not be interpreted as an immediate rollout of higher ethanol blends in the retail market –*AI-GENERATED IMAGE*

AI BOOM EFFECT

1st time in 26 yrs: India Inc out of MSCI EM top 10

MUMBAI, JUNE 11

For the first time in at least 26 years, no Indian company features among the top 10 constituents of the MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) Index, underscoring how the global artificial intelligence (AI) boom is reshaping capital flows and market leadership.

India's largest companies in the benchmark, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries, have slipped to the 11th and 12th positions, respectively, after ranking seventh and eighth in March. India's overall weight in the MSCI EM Index has also fallen to 10.87 per cent, a six-year low and nearly half the record level it reached in 2024.

Market experts attribute the decline largely to the extraordinary rally in AI and semiconductor-linked stocks in Taiwan and South Korea. Companies such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix have attracted a disproportionate share of global capital, pushing their weightings higher in the benchmark.

The MSCI EM Index serves as a benchmark for more than $700 billion in passive funds and influences investment decisions for trillions of dollars in global assets. A lower index weight can reduce allocations from passive funds and affect foreign investment flows.

Analysts, however, caution that the growing dominance of a handful of AI-related stocks has increased concentration risk in emerging-market benchmarks. —*PTI*

Markets close lower in volatile trade

MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower in a volatile trade on Thursday, as investors remained cautious amid rising tensions between the US and Iran.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 150.63 points, or 0.20 per cent, to settle at 73,832.55. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 74,394.34 and a low of 73,518.75, gyrating 875.59 points.

NSE Nifty edged lower by 53.35 points, or 0.23 per cent, to settle at 23,161.60, closing down for the second consecutive day. Intraday, the benchmark index hit a high of 23,327.45 and a low of 23,072.05.

Unabated foreign fund outflows and a spike in US inflation also led to muted market trading, according to analysts. US consumer inflation hit a three-year high of 4.2 per cent in May due to high energy prices amid the West Asia crisis.

In Sensex, Infosys, HCL Tech, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance, Eternal were the biggest laggards. Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank were among the winners.

Sectorally, IT tanked 1.78 per cent. "IT stocks lagged amid concerns that stronger US inflation could delay interest rate cuts and keep global financial conditions tight," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. US markets ended significantly lower on Wednesday. —*PTI*

AI-LED TRANSFORMATION

TCS, Anthropic tie-up; 50K staff to get Claude

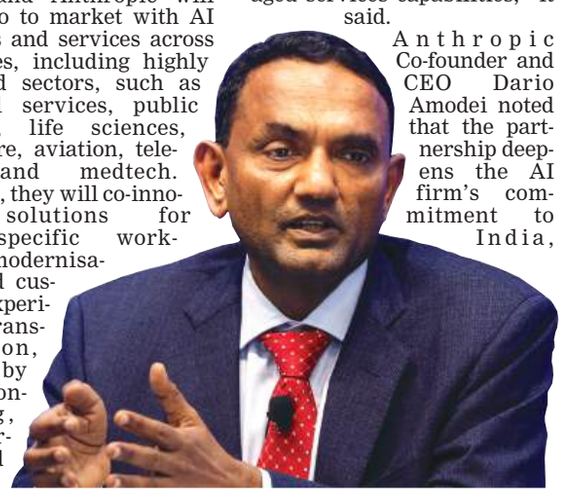
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

IT services major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Thursday announced a global partnership with AI major Anthropic to help customers scale enterprise artificial intelligence adoption.

TCS will set up a dedicated business unit focused on developing joint industry solutions and AI expertise on Anthropic's Claude family of AI models through early access.

TCS will equip 50,000 of its associates across engineering, finance, legal, marketing, and sales with Claude through enterprise-wide licensing, the company said in a regulatory filing.

"TCS and Anthropic will jointly go to market with AI solutions and services across industries, including highly regulated sectors, such as financial services, public services, life sciences, healthcare, aviation, telecom, and medtech. Together, they will co-innovate solutions for domain-specific workflows, modernisation, and customer experience transformation, backed by TCS' consulting, engineering, and managed services capabilities," it said.



Anthropic Co-founder and CEO Dario Amodei noted that the partnership deepens the AI firm's commitment to India, which stands as its second-largest market.

- IT services major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Thursday announced a global partnership with AI major Anthropic to help customers scale enterprise artificial intelligence adoption.

TCS CEO and Managing Director K Krithivasan said the collaboration will help customers move faster to production, particularly in industries where trust, resilience, and regulatory discipline are critical. —*PTI*

US realty firm Opendoor shuts India operations, 250 workers hit

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Real estate platform Opendoor is winding down its operations in India, a move that will impact nearly 250 employees, as the company shifts its focus towards AI-driven processes and relocates roles to the United States.

Opendoor CEO Kaz Nejatian, in an internal memo to employees, said, "When we launched Opendoor 2.0 a few months ago, Opendoor had nearly 250 employees in India. Over the last few months, some of these jobs have been relocated back to the United States.

"Today, we are finalising bringing these roles closer to our customers in America and beginning the process of winding down our India-based operations. This affects all of our colleagues in India who have done meaningful work for Opendoor."

Nejatian said the US-based real estate company had previously built a large team in India to handle manual workflows across fragmented systems.

"As we've unified these systems and have hired small AI-native customer-facing teams throughout the US, we need all this operational work to be done in person and close to our customers," the memo stated, adding that affected employees will be provided with transition packages, including severance and outplacement services. —*PTI*

GOVT TO REASSESS FERTILISER SUBSIDY

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The government on Thursday asserted that the fertilisers stocks in the country is comfortable to meet the demand for the ongoing kharif season and said the subsidy estimates for the current fiscal could be reassessed considering the softening of urea prices in the global markets.

At an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia, Aparna S Sharma, additional secretary in the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, said this. Asked whether the Rs 3.4 lakh crore fertiliser subsidy estimates for 2026-27 would be revised downward due to a fall in global prices, she said the preliminary subsidy estimate was based on the presumption that the trend remains the same.

However, the additional secretary said that the reassessment would depend on the confirmation of the quantities offered by the suppliers and also the total imports.

State-owned National Fertilisers Ltd, which recently floated a tender to import 1.7 million tonnes of urea, has received bids for over 6 million tonnes with the lowest rate of about USD 445 per tonne from global trading companies, according to sources.

The MRP of neem-coated urea is Rs 242 per bag (45kg), while the DAP is being sold at Rs 1,350 per bag (50kg). —*PTI*

Reliance Power's ex-CFO denied bail in laundering case

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Delhi High Court has refused to grant regular bail to the former Chief Financial Officer of Reliance Power Limited in a money laundering case linked to the issuance of an alleged fake bank guarantee of Rs 68 crore.

Justice Madhu Jain dismissed the bail plea by Ashok Kumar Pal on Wednesday, stating that no ground was made out to give him reprieve in the case probed by the Enforcement Directorate.

The case pertains to a bank guarantee of Rs 68.2 crore submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) on behalf of Reliance NU BESS Limited, a subsidiary of Reliance Power - an Anil Ambani group company - which was found to be "fake".

Pal was arrested in 2025. The case stems from a November 2024 FIR that alleged that the firm issued "fake" bank guarantees against a commission of 8 per cent. —*PTI*

India, Nepal link UPI & NPI for cross-border payments

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

India and Nepal have launched a peer-to-peer (P2P) cross-border remittance mechanism on 6 June to enhance convenience for travellers and businesses across both countries, the finance ministry said on Thursday.

The newly operationalised system establishes a direct link between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI), and enables citizens of both nations to make real-time money transfers directly via mobile banking applications and digital wallets.

The technical integration was executed via collaboration between NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India, and the Nepal Clearing House Limited (NCHL).

The key features of the UPI-NPI remittance linkage are enhanced traveller convenience by eliminating the friction of physical currency exchange, carrying large amounts of cash, or navigating unfamiliar foreign exchange fees.

UPI is now accepted in nine countries - Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Bhutan, Qatar, Sri Lanka and Cambodia. —*PTI*

–*PTI*

BOOST FOR FERMIONIC

GlobalFoundries to make 1st RF chip for desi firm

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Semiconductor manufacturing company GlobalFoundries will produce radio frequency (RF) chips for government-backed Fermionic under a partnership, a joint statement said on Thursday.

Fermionic's RF chips will be the first Indian semiconductors to be manufactured by GlobalFoundries, which has been producing chips for global majors such as Qualcomm, Mediatek, Broadcom etc.

Fermionic is a part of an early cohort of Indian fabless companies under the government's Design Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme.

"Our collaboration with GlobalFoundries India enables us to deliver complex, production grade RF silicon, not just prototypes, and build the confidence required by our customers in strategic applications. At this stage of our journey, we needed more than a manufacturing vendor, we needed a partner who understands RF complexity and can support production grade execution. GlobalFoundries' RF expertise and GF India's hands on engagement made that possible," Fermionic CEO Gautam Kumar Singh said.

Fermionic is developing high-performance RF and millimeter-wave (mmWave) chips for radar, satellite communications, telecom infrastructure, and adjacent applications.

The company's product roadmap includes beamformers, phased-array transceivers, RF switches, high-linearity power amplifier chains, and integrated front-end ICs optimised for intelligent sensing, adaptive communications, and AI-enabled RF systems. —*PTI*

–*FREEPIK*

ECB filings fall 30% in April to $3.77B: RBI data

MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

External commercial borrowing (ECB) proposals by Indian companies, including NBFCs, declined by over 30 per cent to USD 3.77 billion in April 2026 compared to the previous month amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

According to the RBI data, total ECB filings stood at USD 3.77 billion in April 2026 against USD 5.43 billion in March 2026.

ECBs are commercial loans raised by eligible resident entities from recognised non-resident entities.

The entire intent was from the general permission, and special permissions remain nil in the reporting month, as per the RBI.

Among the prominent firms that filed intent in April 2026 with the RBI is Renew Surya Roshni, for USD 500 million, for refinancing of existing ECB, Reliance Industries filed for USD 480 million, Serentica Renewables India 14 Pvt Ltd filed for USD 397 million, and Nuclear Power Corporation of India filed for USD 200.46 million for new projects.

Besides, Indian Oil Corporation filed intent for USD 200 million for refinancing of existing ECB. —*PTI*

— UNICEF

Yamal named UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

MADRID, 11 JUNE

Spain winger Lamine Yamal has been appointed as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, becoming one of the youngest footballers to take on the global role ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026. UNICEF announced the appointment on Thursday, highlighting the 18-year-old's commitment to promoting children's rights, particularly the right to play. The organisation marked the occasion on the International Day of Play, releasing a video featuring Yamal interacting with children and sharing his message on the importance of sport and recreation in every child's life. *—ANI*

Haiti alter jersey design after FIFA objection

CALIFORNIA, 11 JUNE

Haiti's football team has been forced to modify their World Cup 2026 jerseys after FIFA raised concerns over elements of the original design that depicted a scene from the nation's struggle for independence Colombia-based sportswear manufacturer Saeta confirmed on Wednesday that the shirts, created in collaboration with the Haitian Football Federation, had been altered following FIFA's review process. "During the review process, FIFA determined that certain visual elements could be interpreted differently under its equipment regulations and ultimately requested modifications to the design," Saeta said in a statement. Neither FIFA nor the Haitian Football Federation immediately commented on the matter. *—PTI*

Injuries force Morocco to make changes in squad

RABAT, 11 JUNE

Morocco have made two changes to their FIFA World Cup squad after key players Nayef Aguerd and Abde Ezzalzouli were ruled out due to injuries, the Moroccan Football Federation and FIFA confirmed on Thursday. Saudi-based defender Marwane Saadane and winger Amine Sbai have been called up as replacements. Aguerd has been sidelined since early March with a groin injury, which later required surgery, and his recovery was further delayed after a pubic bone fracture was discovered in April. Coach Mohamed Ouahabi had hoped for his return but announced on Thursday that he will miss the tournament in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.*—PTI*

'Sonaldo': South Korean Son stars at 4th World Cup

GUADALAJARA, 11 JUNE

South Korea captain Son Heung-min enters his fourth World Cup feeling like a "young boy again" and expecting some extra support from the Mexican fans. Son, who will debut with South Korea at this year's tournament against the Czech Republic in a Group A match in Guadalajara on Thursday, has been playing in Los Angeles in Major League Soccer. In nearby Mexico, he has been called "Sonaldo", a reference that some say is to Portugal great Cristiano Ronaldo and others to former Brazil striker Ronaldo. *—PTI*

Still want World Cup tickets? Here's all you need to know

NEW YORK, 11 JUNE

The World Cup starts Thursday, and FIFA is charging record prices at the 11 stadiums in the United States, three in Mexico and two in Canada.

FIFA is using dynamic pricing and has repeatedly raised the prices since tickets first went on sale last fall. FIFA president Gianni Infantino defended those prices Wednesday as fitting in the North American market, but they have been criticized for list prices that have reached five figures.

Here's where things stand on the eve of the World Cup opener:

Several venues have sold out, but there are seats available for most games.

On the eve of the tournament, 29 games were sold out (with wheelchair seats available for some of those) and 75 had tickets remaining, including both semifinals, all four quarterfinals, five round of 16 matches and 14 of 16 games in the new round of 32. That's in addition to unreleased knockout-stage tickets that won't be available until FIFA knows which teams have advanced to specific matches.

- FIFA has its own resale marketplace, where it collects 15 per cent from both the buyer and seller. In addition, other resale sites such at StubHub and SeatGeek have tickets for sale

Many of those available tickets are in the high-priced category one and category two levels added by FIFA in April. Several hundred seats, all costing four figures, were available for the semifinal in Arlington, Texas, but just over 20 were on sale for the Atlanta semifinal on FIFA's official tickets site.

RESALE MARKET

FIFA has its own resale marketplace, where it collects 15 per cent from both the buyer and seller.

In addition, other resale sites such at StubHub and SeatGeek have tickets for sale.

FIFA's resale site has tickets for the Paraguay-US game starting at USD 661.25 and SeatGeek starting at USD 920. England's game against Croatia at Arlington, Texas, on June 17 started at USD 880 on Seat Geek and USD 850 on FIFA. *—PTI*

WILL MEXICO END ITS 1ST MATCH CURSE

Mexico played 7 opening matches, but lost all

MEXICO CITY, 11 JUNE:

Mexico usually hits a wall when it plays on the opening day of the World Cup.

Of the seven previous occurrences, El Tri's record is five losses and two draws. Mexico gets another shot Thursday when it hosts South Africa to kick off the 48-team tournament.

"We must break that trend," coach Javier Aguirre told a news conference on Wednesday at the Azteca stadium.

"I did not know about that," he said of the winless sequence, "but I'll mention it to the guys. It's a good reason to tell them we need to go out there and win the match. Let's hope we break that trend tomorrow."

Thursday's game is a rematch of the 2010 World Cup opener in South Africa. That game ended in a 1-1 draw at Johannesburg.

Aguirre, who is in his third stint as Mexico manager, has the team playing its best football in years and riding a seven-game unbeaten streak. El Tri's last loss was against Paraguay in November.

"It could be a great day for us; come what may, it will be a celebration that endures for decades," said Aguirre, who played for Mexico at the 1986 World Cup on home soil - when the Mexican squad didn't contest the tournament opener but did reach the quarterfinals.

"I hope we get off on the right foot, just as we did back then," he added. "The players know it: tomorrow could be a historic day for many of them, as it is unlikely these guys will ever experience a World Cup on home soil again." Mexico lost its opening-day games in 1930, 1950, 1954, 1958 and 1962 and had draws in 1970 - at home - and 2010. *—PTI*

WORLD CUP-2026

- Mexico lost its opening-day games in 1930, 1950, 1954, 1958 and 1962 and had draws in 1970 - at home - and 2010

FIFA, FIFPRO sign deal on player transfers

ZURICH, 11 JUNE

The FIFA and the FIFPRO players' union said they have agreed to a landmark cooperation agreement for major decisions including transfer rules and health and safety standards.

The agreement on a memorandum of understanding, which FIFA called "historic," was announced on the eve of the World Cup opener on Wednesday. It comes 10 months after the European Court of Justice ruled some decisions by international governing bodies, such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee, can be challenged outside Switzerland.

The announcement also comes less than two months after a new international group representing soccer players - the Association of International Footballers, or AIF - was founded in Madrid in April to rival FIFPRO.

As part of the new agreement, FIFPRO was recognized by FIFA as the global representative for professional soccer players and lawsuits against FIFA will be dropped by FIFPRO, its division and member unions.

"This MoU marks a new era in FIFA's relationship with FIFPRO," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said.

"Players shape the game we all love, and we must ensure their protection and well-being. That is why we have jointly created a sustainable pathway to ensure that decisions directly affecting them are based on a collective process anchored in social dialogue."

FIFA President Gianni Infantino — PTI

The agreement was announced two days after FIFA said it reached a settlement in a lawsuit filed against it by former France midfielder Lassana Diarra in a case caused by the player missing the 2014-15 season in a dispute with Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow and FIFA.

The FIFA-FIFPRO deal, which runs through 2031, means that players, governing bodies, leagues and clubs will have to jointly agree on future decisions.

A Global Social Dialogue Platform will be established and chaired by FIFA to discuss rules on the transfer system and regulatory matters, as well as player welfare and occupational safety and health standards, including player rest and recovery, vacation, mandatory rest periods and retraining. Future changes will be subject to collective agreement. The platform will include representatives of the World Leagues Association and European Football Clubs. *—PTI*

FIFA cannot get Somali referee entry into US

MEXICO CITY, 11 JUNE

FIFA President Gianni Infantino on Wednesday said FIFA was powerless to get US entry for denied Somali referee Omar Artan into the US.

"We don't control everything. We try. We'll discuss, we will speak, we'll see. Maybe sometimes it's good as well to just chill, relax," he said. "We try to solve everything. Sometimes to immediately start screaming and shouting has the opposite effect of finding a solution. Believe me when I tell you, or don't believe me if you don't want, but we try always to find solutions, always. But then we need to respect that we are not the kings of the world who can rule over governments and police forces."

Set to become the first Somali referee at a World Cup, Artan was denied entry to the US at Miami International Airport on Saturday over unspecified "vetting concerns", US Customs and Border Protection said in a statement, without giving details of the concerns.

Infantino spoke with reporters during a rare question-and-answer session on the eve of the opening match of an expanded 48-nation, 104-game World Cup tournament. He defended record ticket prices saying, "if we do something wrong, then probably everyone selling tickets in North America is doing something wrong". *— PTI*

Tilak, Gaikwad carry India A to 349/9 against Afg A

DAMBULLA, 11 JUNE:

Skipper Tilak Varma, vice-captain Ruturaj Gaikwad and opener Prabhsimran Singh made well-timed fifties as India A scored a massive 349 for nine against Afghanistan A in a tri-series one-day match here on Thursday.

After electing to bat, India were served well by Prabhsimran (84, 69b), Gaikwad (66, 80b) and Tilak (66, 73b) as Afghanistan bowlers struggled to contain the opposition batters at any stage of the innings, which was curtailed to 49 overs because of passing showers.

India's run started with Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, hammering a 22-ball 44 that contained nine fours.

The young left-hander maintained a strike-rate of 200 without even hitting a six, revealing that he is equally adept in finding gaps in the field for boundaries. Sooryavanshi and Prabhsimran added 74 runs for the opening wicket in just 7.1 overs.

Sooryavanshi yet again fell to a bouncer outside the off-stump, this time edging Abdollah Ahmadzai, the most successful Afghan bowler on the day with a five-wicket haul (5/68), to stumper Mohmmad Ishaq while trying a ramp.

After the short stay of Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran added 79 runs for the third wicket with Gaikwad, who brought up his second fifty-plus score of tournament.

Prabhsimran fell to part-timer Imran Mir close to a deserving hundred, but Gaikwad stayed strong to milk 78 runs for the fourth wicket with Tilak, who also made his second 50.

But Gaikwad and Ayush Badoni fell in consecutive balls to Farmanullah Safi. Tilak found an able ally in the Suryansh Shedge (40, 27b), as the pair added 70 runs for the sixth wicket from just seven overs as India eased past the 300-run mark. *—PTI*

Dravid's son Anvay joins U-19 squad

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE:

Legendary batter Rahul Dravid's younger son Anvay Dravid was on Thursday included in India's Under-19 squad for the tour of Sri Lanka, starting on 4 July.

The BCCI's Junior Cricket Committee picked the India Men's Under-19 squads for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka, comprising three one-day matches and two multi-day games.

Yashbardhan Singh Chauhan will lead the one-day and multi-day teams and Lakshya Raichandani is his deputy.

Dravid junior features in the One-day squad as one of the two wicket-keeping options alongside Rajat Baghel, while Manav Krishna and Aryan Sandesh Sakpal have been picked as wicketkeepers for the multi-day fixtures.

Dravid, 17, captained the Karnataka U-19 team to the quarterfinals in the last Vinoo Mankad Trophy in which he aggregated 220 runs in six matches with a highest score of an unbeaten 82.

He has played for the India Under-19 B squad during a triangular home series in Bengaluru that also featured India A and Afghanistan U-19 teams. He also earned selection into Team C for the Under-19 One-Day Challenger Trophy following a string of good domestic performances.

In 2024, Dravid's elder son Samit Dravid was included in India's Under-19 squad for the bilateral home series against Australia, but an injury forced him to miss the rubber. *—ANI*

Wimbledon increases prize money by 20%

LONDON, 11 JUNE:

Amid players' calls for a bigger share of revenues, Wimbledon on Thursday announced 20% increases in total prize money and for the singles champions, who will earn 3.6 million pounds ($4.8 million) at the grass-court Grand Slam next month.

The total prize money including player per diems will be 64.2 million pounds ($85.8 million), All England Club chair Deborah Jevans said at a press conference.

Players have long been calling for a greater share of revenues from the four Grand Slams and recently began taking steps toward collective action.

Ahead of the French Open, No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka said players should at some point organize a boycott if their demands aren't met. Men's No. 1 Jannik Sinner, Coco Gauff and others also spoke out.

Then, in pre-tournament news conferences at Roland Garros, top-10 players limited their sessions with journalists to 15 minutes in symbolic protest of their share of the tournament revenues.

Just over a year ago, 20 leading players signed a letter to the heads of the four Grand Slams seeking more prize money and a greater voice in decision making. *—PTI*

CATCH THEM YOUNG

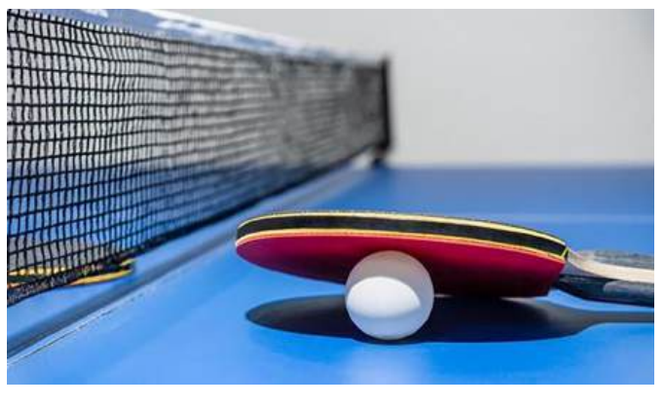
Entry age for TT players lowered to 13 yrs

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The age of induction for table tennis players in the Sports Ministry's flagship Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) has been lowered from 17 to 13 in a major policy change to build India's bench strength for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympics.

Following the decision, two 13-year-olds - Rishaan Chattopadhayay and Tanishka Kalbhairav - have been already included in the TOPS Developmental Group.

Rishaan won the U-15 Boys' doubles gold medal at the WTT Youth Star Contender in Doha earlier this year, while Tanishka made waves when she won the World Table Tennis Youth Contender tournament's under-11 competition in 2023.



The major policy change is to build India's bench strength for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympics —PTI

The other eight inductees following the policy change are Akash Rajavelu (15), Aditya Das (15), Ankolika Chakraborty (14), Naisha Rewaskar (15), Ananya Muralidharan (17), Divyanshi Bhowmick (15), Prisha Goel (17) and Syndrela Das (16).

The eligibility criteria for athletes' induction includes ITTF Youth Rankings.

The top 32 in U-15 and U-17 singles, and the top 16 in U-15 and U-17 doubles events would be eligible for inclusion going forward.

"The objective is to create a continuous pathway from junior development to Olympic preparation," said a Sports Authority of India official.

The 2030 CWG will be held in Ahmedabad, which is also in the race to host the 2036 Olympic Games as part of India's aggressive push towards becoming a global sports hub. Athletes in TOPS developmental group are entitled to a monthly allowance, international training and nutrition support among other benefits. *—PTI*